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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

PART I.

The Mode of Baptism.

BY THE

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Part First.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

I.—FIRST RISE OF THIS QUESTION.

THAT mighty movement of the human mind in the 16th century, which resulted in the great Reformation, was not unaccompanied with some corresponding evils. It was then that the corrupt opinions and practices which had been successively fastening themselves upon Christianity for many ages, were, by the Council of Trent and the Pope together, digested into a firm and compact theological system; and still further condensed into the form of a creed, to be added to the ancient creed of Christendom. Upon the basis of this system and creed, the Roman sect was then separated from other Christian people, and thoroughly organized.

At the same time, and out of the same intense agitation, there arose another sect, which adopted, as its creed—by which to separate itself from all other Christian people—the two following negative propositions: 1. That Christian Baptism can be admin-

istered in no other way than by putting the whole body *under* water. 2. That Christian Baptism cannot be administered to infants.

Now, if this creed be true, it inevitably follows that the Christian Church had ceased to exist long before the creed was published. For, under the terms of this creed, there was no baptized person in the world in the sixteenth century. Infant Baptism had been the universal practice of all Christian nations, and, therefore, after the general conversion of the heathen, there had been in Christendom, for many ages, no adult to be baptized. So notorious was this fact, that the English Church did not provide an office for the baptism of adults until long after the Reformation. As Baptism is the door of admission into the Christian Church, if there was no baptized person, of course there was no Church, and could be none without a new divine commission, properly attested, to authorize some one to administer this sacrament. This consequence is plain enough, and the principle from which it comes, is very distinctly asserted in the following extract from a Baptist paper, which is believed to represent correctly the common teaching of that denomination at the present day :—

“Genuine Baptism is not immersion by an unauthorized minister, nor is it immersion by a Presbyterian or a Methodist preacher, even though he may have been immersed; nor is it immersion by a Baptist preacher. Christian Baptism is immersion by a Baptist preacher who himself *has been regularly immersed by a regularly immersed Baptist MINISTER.*

I have emphasized the latter part of this sentence to make more distinct the principle, which is precisely the same with that held by Episcopalians, and

made the theme of unbounded abuse, under the name of the Apostolical Succession. All that we mean by the Apostolical Succession is, that the Christian Church and its AUTHORIZED MINISTRY, have come down to our time by continuous succession from the Apostles. I do not know that our Baptist friends will hold on to their principle when they see it passing under such a formidable name. But the principle is a truism, nevertheless. For, if the present Church, with its faith, and ministry, and sacraments, had a beginning since the time of the Apostles, then all that infidelity has vainly attempted to prove, is thus gratuitously acknowledged, and the whole Christian argument, so conclusive and so triumphant, is treacherously surrendered to the enemies of our religion.

The first leaders of the Anabaptists saw this difficulty in the way of their new creed, and, in order to cure the defect, they did lay claim to inspiration, as the testimony to a new commission, received from heaven. But the horrible doctrines, and the more horrid practices, of the wild fanatics of Munster, testify that such inspiration as they had, came from a very different place. Roger Williams, the founder of the Baptist denomination in America, was a Congregational minister in Massachusetts. When he adopted the new creed, the only expedient that he could fall upon, was, first, to immerse his deacon, and then the deacon immersed him. It is said that Williams afterwards saw the futility of this scheme for connecting himself with the Church which Christ established, and, therefore, joined the Quakers, upon the ground that Christian Baptism was lost, and could only be restored by a new commission from God, properly attested.

II.—THE NEW CREED FOUNDED ON TRADITION MISUNDERSTOOD.

We will now examine the first article of this modern creed, and see if it is any part of “the faith once delivered to the saints,” or comes with such authority from Scripture, or tradition, as to require our assent to it. As to the old creed of the Christian Church—that creed which has been held by all Christian people, always, and everywhere—which was especially confessed at every Baptism, from the Apostles’ days downward, and which has always been a part of every liturgy in the world—we know that it has not only this authority of universal and unquestioned acceptance, in all ages, as “The faith once delivered to the saints,” but that it “may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture;” that it is, in truth, a brief summary of the very faith largely delivered to us in the Scriptures. But the modern creed has no such warrant; and the first article, about the mode of Baptism, is nothing but an ecclesiastical tradition, perverted and misunderstood. The article is, that Baptism cannot be administered, except by putting the whole person of the candidate under water.

The question, you perceive, is not whether immersion is an allowable mode of Baptism, but whether it is the only valid mode. As a mere question of liturgical usage, any mode of Baptism *which retained the essence of the divine institution*, is allowable. The New Testament is not a liturgy, and, therefore, sets forth no office or form for the administration of this sacrament, beyond the very words of institution. The New Testament assumes, on this point, as on so many others, the existence of the Christian Church,

clothed with authority to decree rites and ceremonies, and to change and modify them, to suit the changing times and circumstances of society and the Church. That changes of mode have occurred, and that varieties of mode have been admitted by the order and practice of the Church, is certain.

As a matter of liturgical arrangement, as a permissible mode of Baptism, immersion comes to us with quite an imposing array of traditional authority from certain ages of the Church. But, even as one mode of Baptism, immersion has no Scriptural authority whatever ; and as the ONLY mode of Baptism, it has no authority and no warrant from Scripture or tradition—from divine or human appointment.

Let us see what we learn from tradition about immersion, as one mode of Baptism. In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church seems to have been in a sort of furor of symbolism. Instead of opposing irreligion and false religion by the simplicity of the Gospel, she was trying to catch the heathen with guile, by engraving upon Christianity the multiplied ceremonies and the elaborate symbols of heathenism. In the elaborate ritual of that period of nascent corruption, immersion was ordinarily one of the symbolic ceremonies connected with Baptism. But that neither this nor any other of their additions to the simple words of Christ, were supposed to belong to the *essence* of the sacrament, these persons plainly tell us. For, in administering clinical Baptism to the sick, they dispensed with every thing but the divine institution, and simply poured a little water on the candidate, in the mystic name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The ordinary mode of Baptism in those ages, was

made as imposing and as full of symbolism as possible. Large baptisteries were built near the church. To increase the effect by a display of numbers, three great festivals were specially appointed for the administration of this sacrament—Easter, Whitsuntide, and Epiphany.

The candidates, looking to the west, because that was the place of darkness, renounced the devil three times, with violent gesticulations of defiance. Then turning to the east, because that was the place of light, they vowed obedience to Christ, and recited the creed three times. Then they were all stripped naked, to symbolize the putting off the old man. Then, while naked, they were anointed with consecrated oil over the whole body, to symbolize the anointing with the Holy Ghost. After this, while still naked, they were immersed three times, to represent their burial with Christ. Then, at last, they were clothed in a white garment, to symbolize the putting on the new man.

Now, if the immersion here mentioned, was the actual Baptism, in the face of the whole Church—and we know that Baptism was performed before the congregation—then all must admit that the progress of corruption had been fearfully rapid, and the sacrament of purity was perverted into an orgie of immodesty and shamelessness, only paralleled by some of the heathen abominations.

Several considerations lead to the conjecture, that all these ceremonies were accessory symbols preceding the public Baptism. The real sacrament was, probably, administered by the priest or bishop, after the candidates had been clothed in white. It is confessed that this is but a conjecture, necessary, indeed,

for the vindication of the Church in those times, and strongly supported by the following reasons :

1. The improbability that the refined nations of antiquity, even with no higher culture than heathenism afforded, would have submitted to this indecency. When we remember that the divine law, which they had now begun to study, made the exposure of nakedness, the synonym for atrocious crime and for the deepest pollution, that improbability is greatly heightened.

2. The baptistery was divided into two parts, one for the men, the other for the women ; and women alone were allowed to wait upon the catechumens in the latter.

3. The complaint made by some of the fathers, of outrages committed by armed men breaking into the baptistery, and compelling the naked women to flee, in violation of the modesty of their sex ; whereas, if they had been baptized in that state, the exposure had already been sufficient to take away all occasion to talk about modesty.

4. The Christians who fled from persecution to the catacombs underlying the city of Rome, and the surrounding country, have transmitted to our times, in the enduring rock, their conception of the way in which Christ was baptized. In a vast number of rude sculptures, they represent the blessed Saviour standing in the River Jordan, and John the Baptist pouring water on his head.

Such is the testimony which tradition furnishes to the practice of immersion, as one lawful mode of Baptism. The apparent weight of this evidence has induced some learned men to suppose that this was the earliest mode of Baptism. But when we come

to "the law and the testimony," to the Holy Scripture itself, we find that this opinion is not sustained by the divine Word. To this examination we will come presently. Whether the immersion used in after ages was the actual Baptism, or only an accessory symbol, the gross indecency of the custom under one supposition, and the abuses to which it was liable under the other, induced the Church to discontinue it. That, as an allowable mode of Baptism, it is the least appropriate and most objectionable, is certain. For immersion, if performed on the naked person, only symbolizes immodesty and impurity. If on the clothed person, instead of symbolizing cleanliness, it will require another and more effectual washing to remove the stains and impurities transferred from the garments to the person. This article of the Baptist creed, therefore, is an attempt to revive a bad custom of an unhappy period, with the *unheard-of addition* that *this alone* is Christian Baptism.

III.—THE PRETENDED ETYMOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE NEW CREED.

Before we proceed to the Scriptural testimony as to this new creed, let us examine the famous etymological argument of our exclusive brethren upon the Greek words *bapto* and *baptizo*. They say these words originally meant to dip, and nothing else. Unfortunately for the argument, the lexicographers do not sustain this position, for they give several other definitions of these words as equally correct, viz.: "to wet, moisten, bedew; to wash, to fill; to draw, to pump water."

The meaning of “Bapto,” as given by native Greek Lexicographers.

HESYCHIUS, the oldest native Greek lexicographer, who lived in the fourth century, gives the following:—

“*Bapto*: to draw, or pump water.”

GASES, a native Greek lexicographer of high reputation, and of general authority among the Greeks, who lived at the beginning of the present century, gives the following:—

“*Bapto*: to wet, moisten, bedew; to wash, to fill, to dip; to draw, to pump water.”

The meaning of “Bapto,” as given by Greek Classical Writers.

1. “When rubbed, it stains (baptizes) the hand.”—ARISTOT.

2. “It tinges (baptizes) the hair.”

3. “Some say, Nicylla, that you color (baptize) your hair.”

4. Aristophanes speaks of a comedian “painted (baptized) with tawdry colors.”

5. “He indeed baptizes a leathern bottle, but it never goes under the liquid.”

6. “The lake was tinged (baptized) with the purple blood of the frog.”

The meaning of “Baptizo,” from native Greek Lexicographers.

SUIDAS, who lived in the tenth century, gives the meaning of *baptizo*, “to wash.”

GASES gives the following meanings: “To wet,

moisten, bedew; to wash, to bathe; to draw, to pump."

The meaning of "Baptizo," from Greek Classical Writers.

1. "To have been impregnated (baptized)."
2. "For I am one of those who were yesterday impregnated (baptized with wine)."
3. "Having impregnated (baptized) Alexander with such wine."
4. "Baptized by intemperance, even to insensibility and sleep."
5. "To load (baptize) the people with taxes."
6. "Burdened (baptized) with calamity."
7. "To be oppressed (baptized) by sleep, like death."
8. "Thou art baptized, O leathern bottle! but thou canst not go under water."*

But, to allow the argument the largest liberty and the utmost possible force, suppose that these words, *Bapto* and *Baptizo*, meant only to dip. The English word dip does not mean immerse (putting under water). The English translation of the Bible frequently uses dip for these words, and the sense of the passage hardly ever allows us to understand by it an immersion. For example:—

"Take a bunch of hyssop, and dip (baptize) it in the blood that is in the basin to sprinkle the door-posts :" Exodus, xii. 22.

In the above, and in several following passages, to dip the end of a thing in any fluid is called the baptizing the whole thing in that fluid.

"And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood : Lev. iv. 6.

* "Letters on Immersion," by the Rev. Wm. H. Odenheimer, D. D., where see the authorities in full.

"The cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip" (baptize) "them, and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy:" Lev. xiv. 6. "And the priest shall dip" (baptize) "his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand :" Id. 16. "Dip" (baptize) "thy morsel in the vinegar :" Ruth, ii. 14. "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same :" Psalm lxviii. 23.

That the word baptize was commonly used for any washing or wetting, without regard to the mode of it, is conclusively proved by two passages in the Book of Daniel. Not all the vociferation of all the Baptist preachers in the world can take away the decisive force of this one testimony :—

"The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was *wet*" (*baptized*) "with the dew of heaven :" Daniel, iv. 33.

"They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was *wet*" (*baptized*) "with the dew of heaven :" Daniel, v. 21.

In these, and in many other like cases, in which dip is given for baptize, immersion is contrary to the sense, and in some of them it is impossible.

But to exhaust this argument, and take out of it the faintest spark of vitality, let us heap concession upon concession, and assume that the original meaning of the Greek words under consideration was not merely to dip but to immerse. If it were so, these words, by a gradual change and transfer of meaning, came to be employed in the Greek of the Old and

New Testament, to express a *ritual purification by water*, without regard to the mode. This religious and technical application of the words never requires immersion—seldom allows it as possible, and sometimes absolutely negatives it as impossible and contradictory.

Such a change of meaning is in analogy with the whole progress of language. To trace the changes of words is to mark the progress and operations of the human mind. There is hardly a word which retains the precise signification of its root, and has not expanded into a great variety of affiliated senses. Sometimes the meaning is so changed that it is difficult to trace the connection. The word prevent, was formerly used in the sense of to help, now it means to hinder.

Proper names, technical terms, titles, and terms of art, are especially subject to this law, for these are given with the most shadowy allusion to the original meaning. But, according to our brethren, language must be treated as the Chinese do their ladies' feet, strapped and bandaged so as to prevent the slightest growth or development.

So, his holiness at Rome must be always, and is only, a—papa: an emperor is nothing but a general of a division. When the Wesleys and their companions commenced observing, very rigidly and precisely, the rules of the prayer-book, they were called by the young gallants at Oxford, Methodists. Now, therefore, according to this notable scheme of theology, a Methodist means a person who adheres most strictly to all the forms and services of the English prayer-book! It would be useless to multiply examples of this sort, of which every cultivated language

furnishes a multitude on every hand. The meaning of any word can only be ascertained by its use. The meaning of a technical term of science or art can only be known by its use in the same science or art.

IV.—TECHNICAL MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTIZE, AS A RELIGIOUS TERM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Under the Mosaic economy, Baptism, as a religious term, signifies the use of water as a symbol and means of ritual purification and separation to the service of God. Christian Baptism is the use of water in the name of the Holy Trinity, as a symbol and means of purification and separation to the service of God, as revealed in the personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is used always to express this sense. There is no instance in Scripture of the addition of immersion to this sense. In some cases of its use, immersion would make nonsense.

This meaning expresses precisely the effect, design, and purpose of Baptism. This sacrament is a visible separation of the party from the world, and from the power of Satan, and a consecration to the service of God, and to a pure and holy life, through the following of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost. This meaning exhausts the whole force of the term, and includes within it all the particulars of which the Christian life consists, and all the analogies by which it is illustrated.

One of the most remarkable features of the Mosaic ritual is its number of purifications. Legal uncleanness was incurred in many of the ordinary transactions of life, and was employed as a type of the pollution of sin, and of the transmissive and com-

municative nature of that pollution. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ix. 10-13, speaks of these purifications generally as "DIVERSE BAPTISMS," and he specifies as one of these baptisms, the use of the water of separation, as provided for in Numbers, xix. 9, 13, 18, 22.

9. "And a man *that* is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it *is* a purification for sin."

13. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel, because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him—he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him."

18. "And a clean person shall take hyssop and dip (*baptize*) it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave."

22. "And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean, and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even."

I entreat every one to read carefully this chapter, so that he may have a proper conception of the nature of legal uncleanness, and of the purifications or baptisms by which it was to be removed. It will be seen that not one of these baptisms are immersions, and the last verse of the chapter is especially noticeable, because it proves that, by the divine law, *no ritual ablution among the Jews could be by an immersion.* "Whatsoever the unclean person toucheth,

shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it, shall be unclean until even."

In conformity with this principle, if an unclean person touched a vessel, or the water that was in it, both became unclean, and that uncleanness would be communicated to every one else who touched them. This divine provision, therefore, required, of necessity, that all ritual ablutions, for hallowing and for purification, should be performed by pouring or sprinkling. For, otherwise, the uncleanness would be indefinitely extended; and even the first person seeking to be cleansed would fail of his purpose if he entered the vessel, or put his hands or feet in it, for it became unclean by his touch, and would communicate that uncleanness to himself, as well as to others.

We read in Exodus, xxviii. and xxix., of the consecration of Aaron and his sons by a baptism—a washing—in which there could be no immersion. And this was the example and type which our Saviour fulfilled when, at his own consecration to the High Priesthood, he employed the ministry of his servant John to baptize him, thus fulfilling all righteousness.

Besides this first consecration of Aaron and his sons, the divine law required a baptismal purification twice every day of the priests who ministered at the altar. The brazen laver, provided for this purpose, was constructed in accordance with the principles which required all ritual ablutions to be by pouring or sprinkling: Exodus, xxx. 18, 19. "The basis of it was so contrived as to receive the water which ran out of the laver at certain spouts. At those spouts the priests washed their hands and their feet before they entered upon their ministration. For if they

had put their hands and feet into the laver, the water in it would have been defiled by the first man that washed therein. And the sea of brass, made by Solomon, was so high that they could not put their feet into it."

"The Talmudists tell us there were twelve spouts, or cocks, in the form of a woman's breast, to let the water out of the laver; so that the twelve priests, who attended upon the daily sacrifice, might wash there altogether:" Bp. Patrick, *in loco*.

This principle of the divine law was so firmly established in the feelings and habits of the people that all the ordinary, as well as the ritual ablutions and batheings of the Jews, were by pouring water on the hands or other parts of the person. And such is said to be the Oriental custom to this day. A striking reference to this peculiarity is found in the description of Elisha, by the office which he held about the person of Elijah. "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah:" 2 Kings, iii. 11.

In conformity with this religious use of the word we have an account of the "Baptism" of Judith every night, "in a fountain of water by the camp."

That this was a ceremonial purification is certain, for it was accompanied with prayer; and after the Baptism, in each instance, the technical formula to express that purification is used: "So she came in clean:" see Judith, xii. 7, 8, 9, where the word washed is, in the original, baptized. That these ritual purifications were by pouring water we have already seen; and, in this special case, every consideration of *decency* and of *modesty* alike forbade that she should have immersed herself in "*a fountain by the camp.*"

The same conclusion is reached, and the familiar use of the word baptize, to express every ritual purification by water, where immersion is precluded, is shown, beyond all pretence of doubt or question, by a passage in Ecclesiasticus, where this word baptize is used to express *the sprinkling of the water of separation*.

“He that baptizeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?” Ecclesiasticus, xxxiv. 25.

Here, as in many places, baptizing and washing are used as convertible terms, and of the nature of *this* Baptism we are precisely informed in Numbers, xix., that it was a sprinkling of the water of separation.

V.—BAPTISM AS A RELIGIOUS TERM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In close analogy with the divine law in regard to purification, were those many needless *voluntary* baptisms of the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, so frequently mentioned by the Evangelists: St. Mark, vii. 2-5; St. Luke, xi. 38.

2. “And when they saw some of the disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

3. “For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4. “*And when they come* from the market, except they wash (baptize) they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, *as* the washing (baptizing) of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5. "Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" St. Mark, vii.

Throughout this passage wash and baptize are used as synonymous, and convertibly for each other, and the sense of immersion is excluded.

38. "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (baptized) before dinner :" St. Luke, xi.

"It is one of the twelve that dippeth (baptizeth) with me in the dish :" St. Mark, xiv. 20.

"There were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews :" St. John, ii. 6.

The water pots, to correspond with both the law and the custom of the Jews, would have been most conveniently arranged, like the brazen laver, with spouts through which the water could be drawn at pleasure for these constantly recurring baptisms of hands, and feet, cups and tables. Accordingly we find that when our Saviour converted the water into wine, it was *drawn* out for the guests.

St. Peter tells us, that Noah and his family "were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us :" 1 Peter, iii. 20-21. In connection with this ancient baptism there certainly was an immersion. But the immersed were not saved, and the baptized were not immersed.

St. Paul likewise informs us of a very remarkable baptism in early times. He says our fathers "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea :" 1 Cor. x. 1-2. Here, again, we have an immersion in intimate connection with Baptism.

But the connection is one of strong contrast, both in the action and in the effect. The baptized were saved, but were not immersed. The immersed were not baptized, but were destroyed.

The setting forth of the pollution of sin, and the necessity of purification from it, and of religious consecration to God, being thus the main purpose of the Mosaic economy, embodied into those constantly recurring rites called, indifferently, purifications and baptisms—the Messiah, the antetype of all these figures, was especially predicted as THE PURIFIER, and was looked for by the people in that character.

“But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness :” Mal. iii. 2-3.

In accordance with this prediction the Jews expected the Messiah, as the PURIFIER, to baptize. Hence their question to John, “Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet ?” John, i. 25. That baptism and purifying were regarded as synonymous, is shown by the passage (St. John, iii. 23-8) where a question about *purifying* is seen to be a question about *baptizing*.

“And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were baptized: for John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews, about purify-

ing. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all *men* come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him."

When Christ was baptized with the Holy Ghost immediately after his baptism by water, John saw the Spirit as a dove descending on him. The only reference to the *mode* of baptism in the New Testament is in the description of baptism by these visible symbols of the Holy Ghost; for the mode of baptism by water was too well known to require any statement about it. This description of the mode of baptism by the sensible symbols of the Holy Ghost is frequently repeated, and in every instance *repels the idea of immersion*. "It fell upon them;" "he shall shed forth this;" "it sat upon each of them;" "they were filled with the Holy Ghost;" "was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

With this known use of the word baptism, to express purification and sanctification by water—the sprinkling of the water of separation, and the pouring of water in other baptisms, as of the priests every day, and of all the people continually by a voluntary service—how must the Apostles have understood and carried out their commission to baptize? At the very first Christian Baptism three thousand candidates presented themselves. Water, "according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews," was at hand at every door, and could be most significantly and appropriately used for the performance of that

simple and beautiful sacrament, of which all these previous baptisms had been but types and figures. The Apostles could not fail, then, to remember the prophecy concerning their ascended Lord: "So shall he sprinkle many nations:" Isaiah, lli. 15; and "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:" Ezekiel, xxxvi. 25-6.

But how, at that time of the day, to have made arrangements in Jerusalem for the immersion of three thousand people would have been a very difficult problem, and the supposition is altogether improbable. And when we know that immersion was forbidden by their law as a mode of purification, and that the repeated immersion of several persons—not to say *three thousand*—in the same vessel of standing water, would have been revolting to all the religious feelings, and to the lifelong habits of the people, the idea becomes incredible and unworthy of entertainment.

To this mass of evidence, satisfactory and conclusive, proving that the first article of the new creed is the merest figment of an undisciplined imagination, our separated brethren can oppose nothing but two prepositions and one figure of speech.

The prepositions are "into," and "out of" the water. It is sufficient to say that the words so translated are frequently, and as properly, rendered to and from. If these particles gave any evidence in favor of immersion they would prove that the baptizer, as well as the baptized, was immersed at every repetition of the sacrament—for "they went down both into the

water, both Philip and the Eunuch." But it seems that this going down into the water was not the baptism after all. For it is then added—"and he baptized him." The explanation of this gratuitous puzzle is, that for persons who wore sandals, and did not wear stockings, the most convenient way of using the water from the stream was to go into it, and then to perform the ablution according to the appropriate mode. As the going down into the water is before the baptism, so the record tells us the going up out of it is after the baptism. The "into" and "out of," therefore, do not tell us any thing about the baptism itself, except that in these two cases it was performed at a river or fountain, and that the parties did not remain on the top of the bank, and send down for the water; but went down to the water, so as to use it most conveniently.

The last resort of this unhappy source of separation among Christian people is the supposed force of a figure of speech employed by St. Paul: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by Baptism into death:" Rom. vi. 3-4. The same figure is repeated in Col. ii. 10-12: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in Baptism."

Baptism, as the entrance upon the Christian life, is intended to symbolize the whole of that life—the entire following of Christ. And in its legitimate sense of purification and consecration to the service of God it does so. For these, as generic expressions,

include within them all the particulars. These particulars are very numerous. They begin with the birth, and go on through the whole life in Christ. Our Saviour has especially connected Baptism with birth. St. Paul accumulates these analogies in the very passages where he uses the figure of a burial, and *connects them all with Baptism*. In Baptism he says we are circumcised with Christ, crucified with him, complete in him. By Baptism we put on Christ, and are grafted into him.

Now, if one of these figures must be visibly acted and represented in the sacrament, *by the same reason must all the rest be so treated*, and so we would turn the blessed sacrament of love and purity into a poor and childish pantomime. This was partially attempted, as we have seen, in the ages of corruption. But it is a miserable trifling with religion, and unworthy of an enlightened age.

In choosing a material symbol of a spiritual effect, some one analogy, by which that effect may be represented, will naturally be adopted, and then the symbol will properly be used to express, although it cannot visibly represent, the same spiritual effect under a hundred different analogies.

Water, as the natural and expressive emblem of purification, has been adopted by the divine Spirit as the matter of the initial sacrament of Christianity. Purification is the only spiritual effect *visibly* represented by this emblem. All the other parts and analogies are equally included in it, and expressed by it, although not thus visibly represented. Water—applied to the person by a lawful minister, in the name of the Holy Trinity, as a symbol of purification and separation from the world, and of consecration

to the service of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—is all that the Scriptures tell us is necessary to make Christian Baptism. This same testimony, and no more, the Church has given from the beginning; proclaiming always—One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.

Driven thus from every Scriptural ground, the advocates of the new creed are glad to find, what they describe as a strong foundation for their exclusiveness, in the expressed opinions of a few eminent men, such as Wall and Whitby, as to the *probability* that immersion was a common mode of Baptism in the Apostolic age. The opinions of these learned men ought to be received with great respect. But when they themselves furnish us the materials for correcting those opinions, or when we can derive such materials from other sources, all the value of such opinions is destroyed. When Dr. Wall assures us, as he does, that the ordinary ablutions of the Jews were by pouring, and that all the baptisms among them mentioned in the New Testament were performed in that way, he has effectually taken from his modestly expressed opinion about immersion all authority.

It is not very difficult to account for this opinion in regard to immersion on the part of these gentlemen. They were churchmen, accustomed to regard with profound veneration, all the customs of the Church in the earlier ages; and they were greatly provoked by the irreverent manner in which some of the Dissenters performed the sacrament of Baptism. The natural reaction from this constantly recurring impropriety gave them a stronger inclination to the mode of administration which pre-

vailed from the fourth century onward, although they held in just detestation the impiety that this was the only mode of Baptism.

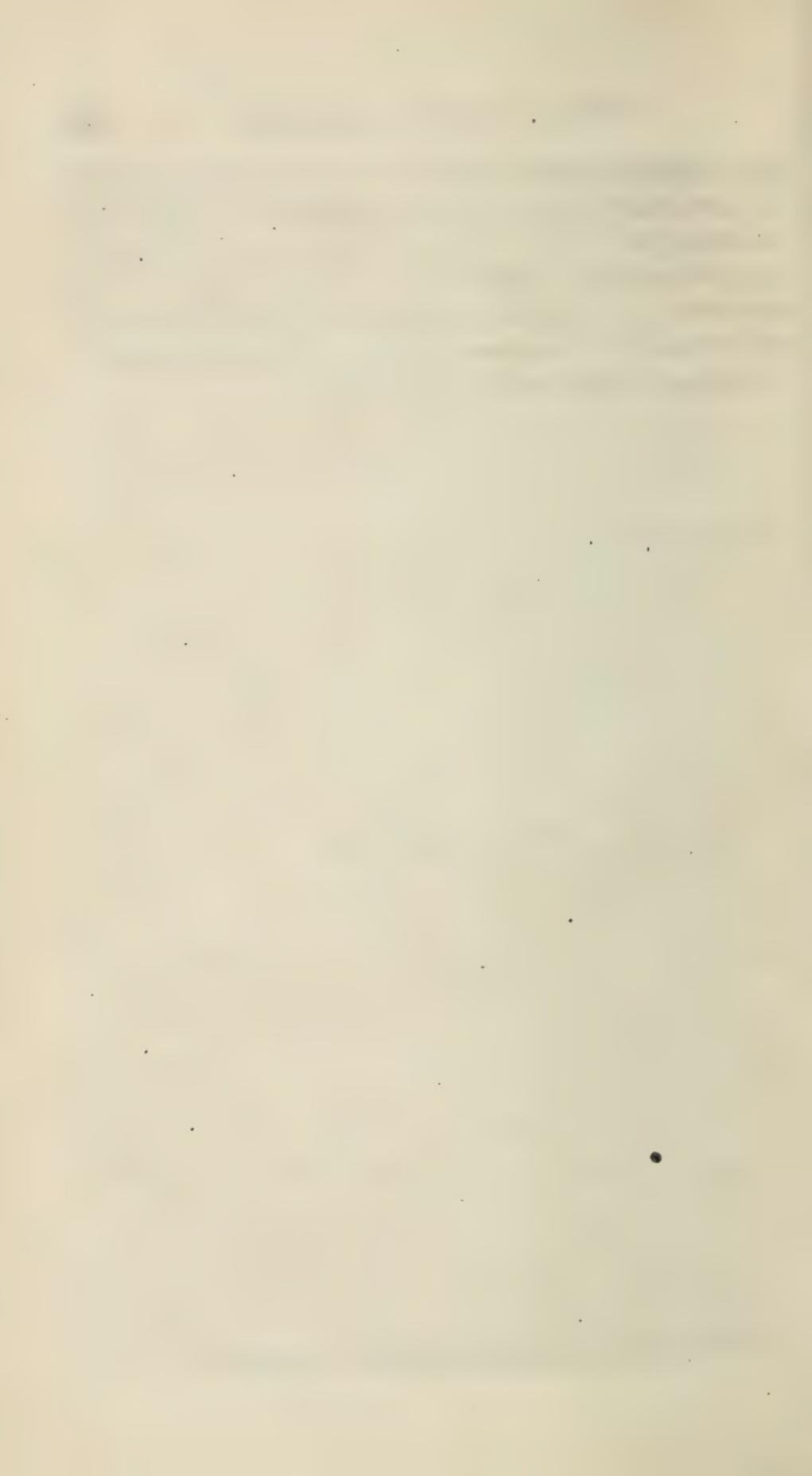
We have seen that the Scriptural testimony is all against their opinion that immersion was the earliest mode. That testimony renders it extremely improbable that it was ever practised by the Apostles, or in the Apostolic age. It is easy to see how immersion was gradually substituted for the simple mode, just as other innovations in the same direction began to prevail, and became universal.

We know that the whole tendency of the religious mind, in the first thousand years of the Church after the Apostolic times, was in the direction of superstition—to the multiplication of ceremonies, and to the exaggeration of the outward part of religion. Hence the necessity of testing every feature of Christianity by the Scriptures themselves, and by the customs of that very Apostolic age. This is the precise principle on which the reformation of the English Church was conducted. Every one can see that, if immersion had been an essential feature of Baptism, at its first institution, no simpler mode of administering the sacrament could ever have been allowed in ages thus characterized by a disposition to magnify the externals of religion. And even if this had been the ordinary mode of Baptism, although not esteemed as absolutely essential, a superstitious age would never have diminished the ceremonial significance of this important sacrament—this door of the Church. It was natural and easy, on the contrary, for such an age to resort to every expedient to increase that significance, to exaggerate the force and appearance of the outward part of religion, and especially this entrance-door

into the mystic temple. Hence the early multiplication of ceremonies in every part of Christianity. Immersion has precisely the same authority, and no more, with the *exorcism*, the *unclothing*, the *anointing*, and the *reclothing in a white garment*. But it is one testimony to the good sense of the Church in all ages, that none of these ceremonies, although in constant use, were ever regarded as essential parts of Baptism ; and were in the first instance adopted, as a voluntary service, for the supposed greater honor of religion, without any opinion of their necessity ; and were afterwards, by the same unconstrained choice—no one questioning the right—gradually disused. In precisely the same way, the Apostolic rite of “laying on of hands,” was, in the very earliest succeeding age, burdened with the additional ceremony of anointing ; and in process of time, the corruption in this instance proceeded so far, that the ecclesiastical addition came to be regarded as the principal part of the rite ; and so, any presbyter could administer confirmation by using an ointment which had been consecrated by the bishop. And at this day it is doubtful whether the accessories of confirmation in the Romish Church have not superseded, and entirely done away with, the real Apostolic institution in that Church. For I can find nothing in the Romish confirmation coming nearer to the “laying on of hands” than the “slap on the cheek” which the officiating minister is directed to give. This innovation of anointing in confirmation, can be traced back further than immersion, and yet there is no authority for either in Holy Scripture. *That is our authoritative guide.* And the practice of subsequent ages is so far a comment upon it, as to show,

that Baptism was always practised according to the institution, and that the quantity of water, and the mode of using it, beyond the words of institution, were never regarded as essential parts of the sacrament, by any respectable body of Christians, until the rise of the new sect, and the promulgation of the new creed in the 16th century.

END OF PART FIRST.





[No. 228.]

SUGGESTIONS FOR A CHOIR.

[*An Extract from the Pastoral Letter of the
House of Bishops, 1856.]*

BELOVED BRETHREN, we would ask your serious attention to the share which the Organist and the Choir are called upon to take in the public duty of devotion. In the ancient Church, there was a far higher solemnity attached to the office of Chorister than we behold in our day. He was consecrated to his task by a kind of inferior ordination, and if he was found to act unworthily, he was openly degraded in a certain form of words, because “what he sung with his lips, he did not believe in his heart.”* Assuredly there was good reason in the principle of this, although the form has long ceased to be found in any Church of Europe. For, the singers in the public congregation should praise God in their hearts, or they cannot escape the sin of taking His name in vain. Their work is professedly a part of the worship prescribed, and it must needs be a mockery, if it be not an act of religion. We cannot, therefore, regard it as anything short of a most grievous and dangerous inconsistency, when the house of prayer is desecrated by a choice of music and a style of performance which are rather suited to the Opera than to the Church—when the organist and the choir seem to be intent only on exciting the admiration of the audience by the display of their artistic skill; and

* *Quia quod ore cantavisti, corde non credidisti.*

the entertainment of the concert-room is taken as a substitute for the solemn praises of that Almighty Being “ who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men.”

Yet this very serious and prevalent abuse was designed to be prevented by the positive rule laid down in the Prayer Book, immediately before the authorized collection of the Psalms and Hymns. For there, it is expressly made the duty of the minister to forbid all unseemly music, and to give order for such as he may approve in the worship of the Sanctuary. This salutary rule, however, is too apt to be forgotten. Our organists and choirs are generally allowed to suppose themselves the only proper judges of the subject, because the Rector is usually no musician. But although he may be no musician, yet he is the ordained guardian of the propriety and consistency of all that belongs to the public worship of the Almighty, and is better qualified than musicians themselves can be, to decide upon what is suitable to the devotional feelings of the congregation. This is the true standard to be adopted in the music of the Church. For it is the right and the duty of the people to join in the praise of God. “ Young men and maidens, old men and children,” are commanded to lift up the united voice of thanksgiving. The strains selected should, therefore, be simple, solemn and familiar; and the practice which keeps hundreds standing to listen to the choir, performing a kind of music in which the people can neither unite nor feel any real interest, should be banished from the Church, as totally inconsistent with the object for which Christian worshippers are assembled together.

Tracts for Missionary Use.

No. 19.

WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO THE CHILD?

[ANSWERING OBJECTIONS AGAINST INFANT
BAPTISM.]



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WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO THE CHILD?

It happened, on a certain occasion, that the Rev. Mr. Worthy found himself in a circle of people who had but little familiarity with the doctrines and usages of the Episcopal Church. Supper was over; such an early supper as country folks are used to have, and the company, assembled in the piazza, was enjoying the pleasant air of a spring evening.

The good wife, who had presided at the board, presently joined the rest, carrying in her arms a beautiful boy, whom she exhibited with all a young mother's pride. The minister did not fail to admire and fondle the little one; but he paused all at once, and asked—

"Madam, has this little fellow been baptized?"

"No," said the mother. She was herself a member of a religious denomination. She had sometimes thought Robert ought to be baptized; but she had not found it convenient, and did not know that to defer it made much difference.

"I wonder that you put it off," said Mr. Worthy. "I know you are an affectionate mother; and when the Saviour says, 'Suffer the

little children to come unto me,' I should think you would be in haste to carry him."

"Of course, I would not neglect it, if any harm would come of postponing it. But really, I have some doubts about baptizing infants. He is too young to know any thing about it. I do not see how sprinkling a little water on him will make him any better. Excuse the question, sir—you know better than I do; but

WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO THE CHILD?"

"I have read," said the minister, "of some mothers who did not ask that question. They seemed to feel that if it would do them good to come to Christ, it would do their children good also. The disciples thought this was a maternal weakness; that the Saviour had something else to do than to trouble Himself with little children; but they were very much mistaken. Why, madam, if you had been in that company, you would have been sure to have carried your baby. You would have returned home and told your husband, with exultation, The Holy Jesus took the little boy in His arms, laid His hands upon him, and blessed him. It would have been a pleasant recollection to you as long as you lived. If one of your neighbors had listened coldly to the story, and then asked you what good all that had done the child, his in-

credulity would not have troubled you; you would have said, like a true mother, I do not know precisely what the benefit was, but I am sure it was a great privilege and blessing for the child to lie even for a moment in the arms and underneath the smile of the Saviour of sinners.

"We Church-people," continued Mr. Worthy, "think that baptism does a child great good. Being by nature a child of wrath, it is therein made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. In other words, in baptism it 'is regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ's Church.'"

"Regenerated in baptism!" exclaimed several voices together. "Surely, you do not believe in baptismal regeneration." And one gentleman, acting as spokesman for the rest, began to say that he was really shocked. He had thought Mr. Worthy was evangelical in his sentiments, and had never expected to hear him avow such an opinion.

"I hope I am evangelical, that is, a believer in the Gospel," quietly said the minister. "And because I am so, I say of baptism what the Gospel says of it. It is 'the washing of regeneration;' or, in the words of the Catechism, 'a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.'"

"But, sir," pursued the objector, "I do not understand how you can think that infants are born again in baptism. The child is unconscious and incapable of moral impressions; there is no apparent change in it; only a little water has been poured on it. And you say it has been born again."

The company had all gathered around the minister. He did not seem very much alarmed by the explosion he had created; but having resigned the unconscious author of the debate to his nurse, proceeded to vindicate himself thus:

"The great trouble in all religion is, that we are unwilling to believe what we cannot see. But still, the most important changes in the life and destiny of men are sometimes effected by a few brief words and simple gestures, unattended by any present and striking alteration in the appearance of things. I have been studying out an instance, wherein a little baby was verily and truly born again, although not in a religious sense, and by means not more powerful than the rite of baptism. Let me state that case to you, and if I prove that an infant may, in a moment, be born again, so far as this world is concerned, I claim that it is not unreasonable to believe that it may be born again in a higher and loftier sense."

"What case do you allude to?" said one of the company.

"Listen, then, and see if I cannot persuade you that an infant may be regenerated."

"The infant Moses shall furnish us an illustration. What was he, when his mother first clasped him in her arms? He was 'a goodly child,' and descended from an honorable ancestry, from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and so may be compared to little Robert, whom we have just sent away, with his gentle eyes, and the divine image stamped on his brow. There is a sense, too, in which Moses was a child of wrath. He was born into a state of slavery; foes were all around him, and at any moment he might be robbed of life."

"Now, what did the anxious mother? Unable herself to save him from death, and to rescue him from servitude, she left all in the hands of a merciful God. Thus Pharaoh's daughter found him. The babe wept, and she had compassion on him. She adopted him for her own son, and became henceforth his friend and protector. I wish you to notice the change that took place in this child. At one moment he is a slave; in the next, a member of the royal family. Just now his infant life might have been destroyed with impunity; but now, none may

touch a hair of his head. And how did all this happen? The child knew nothing, felt nothing. He was replaced in the arms of the mother who had lately resigned him; he was surrounded by the same people, and drew nourishment from the same breast. Only the babe had wept, and Pharaoh's daughter had smiled. She had pronounced a new name over him, and bidden the mother 'take this child away, and nurse it for me.'

"After a time the result was seen: Moses was carried back to her, he was educated in the learning of the Egyptians, and reaped the advantages of his adoption.

"Now the point I wish to impress is this: when Amram and Jochebed looked upon the face of that infant, as he lay again in his cradle by their hearth, did they not feel and know that their child was regenerated, born again? Had the child died and been brought to life again, they could scarcely have been more rejoiced. Those few words of royalty had planted a guard around his cradle; had preserved life, and changed its direction from the brick-yard to the palace.

"Now, madam," continued the minister, addressing the mother, "just answer me this question. Here is your babe born into a world full

of trouble, temptation, and danger. No love, no care, no watchfulness of yours are of themselves sufficient to preserve him from slavery and ruin. You bring him then to Christ, through His Church and ministers. A little water is poured on him; a name is given him. Christ says, I adopt this child into my own family. The child is returned to you with a solemn charge to nurse him for Christ, and in due time to return him to his benefactor. Is there no reality in that? Is it profanation to say that the little one thus blessed and adopted is born again? Are Christ's words less effective than those of the Egyptian princess?"

The lady addressed was not disposed to dispute what was said. She observed, however, with some hesitation, that she found it hard to believe there could be so much in a mere ceremony.

"Ceremonies," answered Mr. Worthy, "are sometimes the emptiest of things; sometimes they are the fullest of meaning and substance. When Pilate washed his hands before the people, that was a vain ceremony; not thus can men throw off the responsibilities of their station. But to take an example which you cannot fail to appreciate. There was an inseparable knot fastened, in that little moment of ceremony when

your good man placed the wedding-ring on your finger. Ceremony, if it means nothing, confirms nothing ; if it is the outward and visible sign of nothing, is beyond expression absurd and ridiculous. But when it gives expression to a thought, a purpose, a covenant, it works most important changes. No ceremony that Naaman could have performed in the rivers of Damascus could have benefited him. It was otherwise when by Divine command he dipped himself seven times in Jordan. A tear is but the ceremony of grief; very unmeaning in the stupid eye of a drunken man ; but how eloquent as it steals down the face of the pitiful ; what a relief to the sorrow of the heart-stricken !"

The company then began to discuss the case of Moses, and his " baptism of the world," as some one suggested they might call it. They agreed that " born again," was not too strong a figure of speech to be applied to his case ; they agreed, too, that the case of a Hebrew child, in a Hebrew house, in the arms of a Hebrew mother, while for all that he was adopted into the family of their Egyptian king and ruler, was a striking illustration of a marked change which may occur while present appearances are unaltered. Still, they were unwilling to accept the conclusion which Mr. Worthy sought to found upon it, and

various difficulties were suggested, some of which I will mention.

"Suppose, Mr. Worthy," said the gentleman who had previously spoken, "that I allow what you claim. Moses was born again, not actually and really, but in a figurative sense. Now what do you gain? Your baptized child may be born again, to be sure, but only in a figurative sense."

"Our Saviour answered that difficulty long ago," said the minister. "Nicodemus understood him to mean that a man must literally be born again. Our Saviour explained to him that the Spirit's work is something which we cannot fully comprehend. It can be taught us only in such words and phrases as we use in common life. The new birth is of course a figurative expression; but every figure has a meaning, and in this place it has a plain signification. We might say that Moses was born again at the word of Pharaoh's daughter, because his worldly position and prospects were instantly changed. So also in baptism the child is born again, because his religious attitude and his spiritual state are altered. Eternal life is pledged and promised to him, and in anticipation of it, all that is necessary to fit him for it."

"But, sir," pursued the objector, "you seem to use very unwarrantable language. You do not

merely say that the child is born again, in some general and figurative way; but you say—where is it? Do somebody find the place for me."

"Let us go in where I see the lamp is burning," said Mr. Worthy, "and bring all our doctrine to the light."

Thus the party gathered around the centre-table; Prayer-books were opened; and the objector found what he was in search of. "Here it is. *We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with Thy Holy Spirit.* How can you explain or excuse that language? The service does not say that the child is born again because it is dedicated to God, or put into the Church, but it says that God has regenerated him with His Holy Spirit. Stay, here is a prayer in which the same language is used—*That he, coming to Thy Holy Baptism, may receive remission of sins, by spiritual regeneration.*"

"I agree with you," said Mr. Worthy, "that this is plain language, and strong language. The child is said to be born again, and the Spirit is said to be the author of that new birth. And pray, my friend, *who else, what else could be the author of this change?* The water? or the man who applies it? No, it is by *one Spirit* that we are all baptized into one body, as St. Paul says.

The Holy Ghost, the Comforter promised by our Lord, is ever present in the Church. He is present when the child is baptized. His presence gives validity and efficacy to the transaction. We, the ministers, are but the agents of the Holy Ghost. It is He who places the child in the arms of Christ, and seals him as the Lord's, while we testify this invisible spiritual truth by deed and gesture."

"You are getting too deep for us ladies, now," said one of his fair auditors. "You are usually good enough to be quite intelligible to our slender capacities, but this time I am altogether in the dark, and if I am any judge of countenances, even our wise gentlemen are somewhat at a loss."

"You must excuse the fault," replied the minister. "Some things cannot be made as plain as some other things, you know, and the difficulty is increased, when, as in this case, the subject is not familiar. In our popular religion the nature and offices of the Holy Ghost are very much left out of view. Nine persons out of ten think of the Holy Ghost as a thing, not as a Person, and speak of Him as *it*. But I will try again. You understand that the Holy Ghost is the Comforter of the Church, another Comforter, filling the place vacated by our Lord's departure?"

"Oh, yes; that is plain."

"And that the Church walks in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, that is, under His guidance and direction?"

"I can follow you that far."

"Well, now one step higher. You remember what St. Paul says in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians. The substance of it is, that there are many gifts in the Church; but all proceed from the same Spirit. That the Holy Ghost divides these gifts severally as He sees fit: to one man He gives the apostleship, to another prophecy, to another the power of miracles, to another the gift of tongues. Every religious benefit was, in St. Paul's view, the gift of the Spirit. Whatever good thing is done in the Church, the Holy Spirit is the doer of it. At the font the world sees only the priest, the child, and the sponsors. But the Christian recognizes a more awful, an all-essential presence, that of the Holy Ghost. It is under His auspices that baptism is administered, and He is the author of the change that then takes place."

I am not sure that Mr. Worthy's auditors were quite satisfied with this explanation, although they did not make any further objection. If the reader will study carefully the chapter referred to, perhaps thus much of its meaning will be plain to him: that the Church is a body, of

which Christ is the head ; that in baptism the Holy Spirit makes us members of it, so that the life of Christ is our life, and we are brought into vital union with Him. Or if we recur to the figure of the vine, or the olive-tree, we may reach the same truth. Man may insert the graft into the tree, but the Spirit himself must make it a living union, so that the graft shall partake of the strength and fatness of the root. But this thought Mr. Worthy presently suggested.

"There is another expression in the baptismal service," continued the minister, "which is very instructive. After the baptism has been performed, the minister turns to the people and says, 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and *grafted into the body of Christ's Church*, let us give thanks——' Consider what this means. The gardener takes his slip of wild olive, and inserts it into the good olive-tree ; he confines it there, makes it adhere ; he does the mechanical part of the work. But there is a mysterious principle, which we call vegetable life, the workings of which are directed by the great Creator. And where we can effect no more than an external union, God himself makes it a living union, so that the graft is part and parcel of the tree, growing and increasing with it.

“So, also, of the child brought to holy baptism. If the Spirit were absent, the child would be like a dead twig fastened to the tree; but the Spirit in some mysterious way makes the transaction a true ingrafting, and the little one becomes ‘a lively member;’ that is, a living branch of Christ. Surely, even the ladies (if they will excuse me for falling in with their self-depreciation) can see how this is. According to God’s mercy we are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. In the bath of regeneration we are grafted into Christ, we become members of Christ’s body, of His flesh and of His bones, as St. Paul says: and afterwards, day by day, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, like the life-blood pouring from the heart to the smallest member of the body, repairs the waste of sin, and effects growth and beauty.”

“You think, then, that in baptism a child is justified and sanctified?”

“Those are two distinct propositions. The Church teaches, that in baptism the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, *are* visibly signed and sealed. But the infection of nature is not taken away; evil passions and perverse dispositions remain. The Spirit is promised to as-

sist him, but his sanctification must be effected by long struggles with temptation, and final victory over the world. To recur to our illustration, Moses was at once emancipated from the sentence of death promulgated against his race; at once became the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But then the Hebrew nature remained, and he had need to be educated and trained, in order that he might sympathize with the family of his adoption. This is, to be sure, an inadequate illustration; for these earthly things do but faintly shadow forth the heavenly. For my own part, I do not love to refine on this matter. I believe just this: that in baptism the child is made a Christian; all the Christian, if I may say so, that his age admits of; and besides this, heavenly grace is promised to be given him as he advances in age and temptations multiply around him."

Just here a young lady ventured to interpose. Said she,

"I am rather on your side, Mr. Worthy; but still I have just been thinking that there is one circumstance which destroys all this lesson you have derived from the case of Moses."

"What is that, my friend?"

She handed him a little Bible, and pointed him to the verse, "By faith, Moses, when he was

come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." "There, now," said she, "he kept the name of his adoption, but was Hebrew of the Hebrews after all."

A good-humored smile passed over the faces of the company, and some curiosity was excited to see what reply could be rendered.

"Patience, friends," said the minister, "let me make my showing. I have all this time been expecting some of you to object that baptism cannot do the child any good, because, after baptism, we often see him grow up to be an ungodly, irreligious man, and, as we fear, come at last to an impenitent and hopeless death-bed. See, then, this case of Moses. When an unconscious babe the princess adopted him as her child: when he came to years he refused to ratify that adoption, and cast in his lot with another people. But this did not prove that all which happened to him in his infancy was unreal. His life was saved; he was verily, for a time, the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he did enjoy the privileges of the palace, although in mature age he preferred the ties of nature and blood. So then, if you point me to some profligate man, and say, here is your church-member, your child of God, that was regenerated in baptism, what will you make of him? I answer, he

was made a child of God; he *was* born again into the kingdom of grace; the Holy Spirit *has* been given him to make him meet for his inheritance; but, like Moses (and yet how unlike him in motive and character), he has disavowed his adoption; he has refused to continue in his state of salvation; he has grieved the Spirit and sold his birthright."

"You have the advantage of us, after all," said one in reply. "Your parallel is well sustained."

"This is not all, however. We do not teach our children that the regeneration of baptism will save them, unless followed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. No; when they come of age, the Church is careful to instruct them, that if they would maintain their state of privilege, they must themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confirm their baptism. If they have not lived prayerfully and religiously, we tell them that they must be converted or they will assuredly be lost. God will not force His mercy on them; they may, if they will, undo His work of grace and frustrate His kind purposes."

The young lady, however, had still a difficulty, which she thus suggested: "When Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daugh-

ter, he did right; but when a baptized person refuses to be called the child of God, he does wrong. She did not see how one case could illustrate the other."

"Every comparison," replied Mr. Worthy, "implies difference, as well as likeness. I have been arguing that a real and important change in a child's state and prospects may be effected while he is unconscious, and without any visible alteration of his circumstances. The point is, that adoption by one who means what he says, and has the power to carry it out, is a real something, and not an empty ceremony. True, the same motives which led Moses to throw off that Egyptian citizenship which was conferred upon him in his infancy, should lead us to ratify the heavenly citizenship which was conferred upon us in ours. In both cases, however, the proposition is true, that AN UNCONSCIOUS BABE MAY, BY THE ACT OF ANOTHER, BE MADE THE CITIZEN OF A KINGDOM TO WHICH HE DID NOT PREVIOUSLY BELONG."

The time had now arrived for the evening devotions of the family. When these were over, the guests began to retire, and Mr. Worthy was left alone with his host, the father of little Robert. Dr. Talbot (for that was his name) was a quiet and thoughtful man, accustomed to

listen more than to speak. But now he pursued the topic in which they had been engaged. Said he,

"You must think it strange, that, belonging as I do to a Pedo-Baptist denomination, I have neglected to have our child baptized. One of my difficulties has been a dislike of mere ceremony; and such infant baptism has always seemed to me. This difficulty you have partly met. If baptism be adoption into the family of God, there is a reality in it; if the Holy Ghost be invisibly present, and warrants what is done, a blessing must go with it. But I have several other difficulties, of which I should be glad if you could relieve my mind."

Mr. Worthy assured him that he would be pleased to do so, and Dr. Talbot continued:

"I think I am tolerably familiar with this controversy, as usually conducted. For instance, the argument drawn from circumcision. I see the force of that. If children were members of the Jewish Church, it is at least possible that they may be members of the Christian Church; it is even probable that they ought to be so. But then I come to the New Testament, and ask what is its doctrine? After studying all the passages that bear upon the point, such as the baptism of households and the like, I am left, not

exactly unbelieving, but dubious. I feel the want of some one clear, convincing, indisputable argument. Allow me to ask, have you always been as well satisfied on this subject as you are now?"

"Oh, no," said Mr. Worthy. "I well remember the time when I was much disturbed about this question, and another much like it,—the observance of the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, as a day of rest. For a year or two of my youth I was quite unsettled on both of these points, and was inclined to think that the Church had scarcely sufficient warrant for her practice in both respects."

"And how did you find relief?"

"By a process so simple that I wondered it was not sooner suggested to me. My dear boy, said a wise old minister to me, do you know what a fact is? Oh, yes, I said, a fact is something done. Very well, he replied, a fact is something actually done; it is the footprint in the sand, such as Robinson Crusoe saw on his desert island, and worth a hundred theories about Indians. Whenever you see that footprint, know you certainly that the truth has passed along that way. You would save yourself much trouble, he added, if you would accustom yourself to think of religion as a fact. Christ Jesus died for sinners: that is a doctrine,

but it is also a fact; it actually happened. When the doctrine is objected to and argued against, no reply is so convincing as that the fact is well ascertained. Jesus Christ did suffer under Pontius Pilate. The fact must be disproved before the doctrine can be refuted. The Universalist argues that God is too merciful to punish. The apostle points to facts: God *has* punished; he spared not the angels that sinned; he spared not the old world, bringing in the flood; he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes. Before these facts, all mere speculations are utterly worthless."

"All that is just," said the doctor; "but what has it to do with the matter in hand?"

"It has much to do with it. Infant baptism, and the observance of the Lord's day, are great facts, standing out in bold relief upon every page of the Church's history. So, also, if you will allow me to say so, are Confirmation and the government of bishops. If you are at a loss to know whether infants are included in the household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, the broad, evident fact, that they have been so included in all countries, and in all ages, is a commentary absolutely conclusive."

"But, sir, is not this to attach great value to mere human tradition?"

"Tradition has its value: it deserves credit when it reports facts; not so much when it delivers doctrines. For instance, a number of unlearned and uninspired men might lead us into grave error if we relied on them for the apostolic doctrine. The unintentional change of a word or two might alter the whole meaning of what was said by an apostle. The Gospel is *written*, that our faith may be sure. But in matters of fact, and more especially of custom, or oft-repeated fact, there is no room for mistake. Even unlettered men are reliable witnesses when examined about a plain fact. The humblest Christian in every age knows whether it is the practice of the Church to baptize infants. I insist that the universal, undisputed custom of the Church for many ages is just the conclusive and satisfactory argument which you need. Put away, my dear sir, all difficulties that are imaginary. When any one argues that infant baptism is unreasonable, point him to these great facts: that God did for ages embrace children in the Mosaic covenant; that Christ pronounced children to be fit members of His holy kingdom; that the Church has invariably received them into her fold. Tell him, Explain to me those footprints in the sand, and then I will listen to your theory."

Dr. Talbot was silent a while, and then proceeded to mention another difficulty.

"I have a sort of fear, that in all this we may be ascribing too much value to ordinances. This doctrine seems to confuse together the spiritual truth and the material object; religious benefit with bodily worship."

"I would answer," said the minister, "that this commingling of the visible and the invisible, of spirit and of matter, is one of the most notable features of the Gospel. Heaven and earth are separate, and the heavens are higher than the earth. Yet in Christ heaven is let down to earth, and earth is raised towards heaven. There is a region where they so meet and blend, that one can scarce say whether there is most of earth or heaven. How impossible to draw a clear dividing line between our Lord's humanity and His divinity, so did His divine nature permeate the human, and into so close relation was His humanity taken by His divinity! See the same in His miracles. He could heal by a mere word. Why place His fingers in the deaf man's ears? Why anoint the blind eyes with clay softened by the moisture of His lips? See you not that it is the method of God to unite His invisible grace and power with visible means and emblems?"

“His grace and truth, as I have somewhere read, are like a subtle essence which eludes our coarse senses, and threatens to exhale; and he kneads it into a more common substance, in order that we may hold and use it. Our religion is no abstraction: we cannot sever the truth from the words in which it is embodied, so as to have the ‘religion without a creed,’ for which some are so clamorous now-a-days; we cannot separate the religion of the heart from that of the life, or the grace of pardon and life from the sacraments in which they are conferred.”

“One question more,” said the doctor, “and I will no longer detain you from your rest. I have observed that you speak vaguely about the precise nature of the baptismal benefit. Now let me ask, am I to understand that in baptism there is a moral change? Are the child’s temper and disposition revolutionized or modified, as a grown man’s would be upon his conversion?”

“I will answer you, frankly and fairly; I know nothing about that point; the Church teaches nothing about it. We do not know any thing about that infant soul, as yet undeveloped and unreasoning. I am sure the Holy Ghost is given to him as his sanctifier and comforter; but when and how He begins and carries on this work of sanctification, you and I can never know.

Enough to know that Christ adopts the infant as His own, pledges to him remission of sins, engages that the Holy Spirit shall be with him, and promises perfect purity and eternal life as his final reward. This promise, He for His part will most surely keep and perform. I do not hesitate to believe that a child thus translated out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, with every facility secured to him that he can possibly need, in order to contend successfully, and to reign at last with Christ, is verily and truly regenerated by God's Holy Spirit."

The writer cannot relate further discussions which passed upon this subject. Suffice it to say, that before Mr. Worthy left the neighborhood he had the pleasure of baptizing little Robert. When he came to bid Dr. and Mrs. Talbot farewell, he said to them, "Remember the charge. *Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give thee thy wages.* Nurse him well, but with reverence added to your love. He is born again; he is a king's son. Take good care of this heir of God, this joint-heir with Christ, and great shall be your reward in heaven!"

Another circumstance may be worthy to be related. On the afternoon of the day on which little Robert was baptized, Dr. Talbot was busily

engaged in the garden. His wife found him doing something to a tree, but to her inquiries he made some quaint answer, which conveyed no information. Its effect was, that he was cultivating an argument.

Some time after, one of the doctor's former religious associates (for he and his wife in a little while followed their little boy into the Church) brought up this subject of baptism, and inquired wherein his present views differed from those he used to hold.

"Let us go into the garden," said the doctor, "and I will show you." He and his friend paused before a tree, and the doctor pointed with his stick to a withered branch, carefully tied with twine to a round limb. "I used to believe that in baptism a child was dedicated to God: that is, that he was fastened on to the Church, but with no present spiritual influence or blessing. If such be the true doctrine, there is an illustration of the result. Now, see here," he continued, pointing to another limb, "the Prayer-book taught me that in baptism the child is not tied on, but grafted in by the Holy Spirit. See that little twig. I put it there, and the life-giving Lord has made it part of the tree."



THE

Office and Duties
OF GODPARENTS

"*Ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made by you.*"

BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

IT was said by a good man* nearly two hundred years ago "It is sure that if the institution of godfathers and godmothers were prudently undertaken, and well performed, there could not be a more effectual means to repair the decay of Christian piety." And indeed we may say the same. I will therefore now, in the hope that it will please God to bless them, say a few words to you, on your office and duty as a godparent. If you already know your duty, this will serve to remind you of it: if, however, you are one of those, who think their duty is over when once they are out of the church, I will show that this is a very sad mistake; and if you give heed to what I am about to say, you will, I am sure, some day be thankful to me.

The office of sponsor, that is, godfather or godmother, is very ancient: it was, and I believe still is, a Jewish custom; and many learned persons think that the "faithful witnesses" mentioned by Isaiah (viii. 2) were what our godparents now are. But however this may be, it is quite certain that the office has always existed in the Christian Church—it is spoken of by the most ancient fathers. One, Tertullian,† who lived more than

* Dean Comber, *Companion to the Temple*.

† *De Cor.* v. 3.

sixteen hundred years ago, says, "that after baptism there were certain persons to undertake the charge of the baptised," that is, there were godfathers, as there are among us.

Your office, then, is of very ancient date; it is also a very sacred one. You have been allowed by Almighty God to "stand for" a child of His: in that child's name you have solemnly given certain promises to God: your faith in particular, as well as the faith of the whole Church in general, has been pledged for the infant; and the Lord Jesus has accepted it, as we know He did sometimes when He was on earth* (St. Matt. ii. 5, St. John xi.). Therefore you are *indeed* that child's father or mother in God; and "by this old accustomed name, you are well put in mind" that you have a sacred duty to perform.

What, then, is this your duty?

The child whom you presented at the font in church—for whom you promised, is now a "child of God." He was "born in sin," he was once the child of wrath: now he is no longer so; now, by God's mercy and grace, given in Holy Baptism, he is "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Wherefore "it is your part and duty to see that this child be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life;" you are to see that he be brought up for his Father which is in heaven; to see, as far as in you lies, that he learn to live up to his "high calling of God in Christ Jesus;" to see that as he grows in years he may grow in grace.

This your duty, then, you will perform, by remembering,—

1. That you have undertaken that the child shall "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh." You must see, therefore, that as soon as he be able to learn, he be instructed what this means; what he is to forsake and avoid; how careful he should be not to fall into sin; how watchful he should be against temptation.

2. You have engaged that he should "believe all the articles of the Christian faith;" therefore you must see that he learn the Creed, "the faith once delivered to the saints," while he is still very young, even before he is able to understand it.

3. You have engaged that he shall "keep God's holy will and commandments;" therefore it is your part to see that he learn

* St. Cyril, *Cat.* v. 8, 9.

'how many they be,' and what they are. This also should be done while he is very young, and still unable to perceive their meaning.

4. Forasmuch as we cannot do these things of ourselves, nor walk in the commandments of God and serve Him without His special grace; and forasmuch as we must learn at all times to call for this grace by diligent prayer, therefore you must see that your godchild be early taught to pray to his heavenly Father; to look up to Him as the Author and Giver of all good things; especially should he be taught to pray to Him in the words of His own "beloved Son."

5. And that your godchild may know these things the better, you must bring him betimes to God's holy house to hear sermons, to learn from his spiritual pastor; you must bring him to the Church to be catechised by the minister; you should teach him to look up to his pastor, as, under God, his guide and friend.

6. As the holy rite of Confirmation makes perfect the sacrament of Baptism,* therefore, whenever the Bishop allows, you are to take care that your godchild be brought to him to be confirmed by him.

You cannot, indeed, give your godchild grace to do these things,—that must come from God, from whom comes every good gift; but you may advise, exhort, rebuke; you may always give him a good example how a Christian should direct his life; you may pray often and earnestly for him, and God, we trust, will hear and answer you. If, however, it should seem otherwise, if (as far as man can see) your prayers are not answered, and your advice and reproofs appear to be thrown away; ye, at least, in this way you will relieve your own conscience—you will have discharged your duty: if your godchild at last be lost, his blood will not be on your head.

Perhaps you are yourself a parent, and you may be looking for some one to "stand for your child;" then let me earnestly pray you not to fix on any one merely because he is one of your own family, still less as a compliment to him; try rather to procure some one who knows what the office means; who will endeavour, by God's grace, to fulfil the duties of it; who will not mock God, by taking on himself duties which he does not care to perform. let it be some one who is a partaker of the Holy Communion.

* Bp. Wilson, *Sacra Privata*, p. 89., Appleton's edit.

THE OFFICE AND DUTIES OF GODPARENTS.

And if you are asked by some parent to be sponsor to a child, do not refuse because there are high and awful duties attached to the office; but remember, that when you yourself were made "the child of God," others stood for you; that it is a duty we owe one to another, and all to God's Church; that it is a work of kindness and charity, a work, for which, if you faithfully perform it, God will not fail to bless and reward you.

And now I will conclude in the words of an old sermon,* believed to be by St. Augustine:—

"Of this I admonish you, brethren beloved, whoever of you, men or women, have received children from the sacred font, remember that you have promised for them to God. Ever, therefore, have for them the anxiety of true charity. Admonish ye them to guard chastity, to preserve their virgin state until the time of marriage; to refrain their tongues from cursing and perjury; let them not sing filthy or wanton songs; let them not be proud or envious, or keep anger or hatred in their hearts; let them hold fast the Catholic faith; let them often hasten to the church; let them hear the divine words with attentive ears, not caring for eloquent language; let them entertain strangers. Admonish them that they be peaceful themselves, and those who are at variance let them reconcile; to priests and parents let them give honour and true affection. These, and such-like things, if ye earnestly strive to work into the hearts of your sons and daughters, with them ye will attain to everlasting blessedness."

* *Serm. de Tempore, clxiii.*; ascribed by the Benedictines to Cæsarius Bishop of Arles.

#5

LETTERS

ON

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

BY DEFENSOR.

"FOR this cause Christ ordained Baptism in water, that as sure as we see, feel, and touch water with our bodies, and be washed with water; so assuredly ought we to believe, when we be baptized, that Christ is verily present with us, and that by him we be newly born again spiritually, and washed from our sins, and grafted into the stock of Christ's own body, and be apparelled, clothed, and harnessed with him in such wise, that as the devil hath no power against Christ, so hath he none against us, so long as we remain grafted in that stock, and be clothed with that apparel, and harnessed with that armor." — *Archbishop Cranmer, Works, II. 302.*

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PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY.

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LETTERS

ON

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

LETTER I.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION TAUGHT BY THE PROTESTANT
EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

— — — *Rectory, January 30, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR : —

When unhappily for his own comfort and peace, a clergyman finds himself differing in doctrinal opinion from a parishioner so deeply interested in theological controversy as yourself, he cannot but desire to justify his position, and, if possible, to convert a disbeliever and opposer into a friend and advocate, **BY APPEALING TO OUR APPROVED STANDARDS, TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE EARLY CHURCH, AND TO THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES.**

But how shall this attempt be made ? Historical and minute details are little suited to the pulpit, and private explanations may be desultory and exciting ; so that the only course remaining for me is to address you by letter. This then is my apology for troubling you with this communication, and for venturing to trespass upon your valuable time.

In our conversation last evening, you remarked, that **BAPTISMAL REGENERATION IS TAUGHT BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.** In this conclusion you are certainly very correct ; for in HER AUTHORIZED STANDARDS, AND BY HER MOST RESPECTED DIVINES, this Church, both in England and her dependencies, and in this country, has spoken on this subject with no uncertain voice.

You are familiar with the decided language of the Church in her *Office for the Baptism of Infants*, where she thus expresses her

judgment concerning every baptized infant, " Seeing now, that this child is *regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits: We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to *regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit*, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy Church."

In the *Homilies*, which as you know, our XXXV. Article of Religion recognizes as standards of doctrine, you will find these declarations respecting the effects of baptism: " The sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross obtains remission, *as well of our original sin in baptism*, as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism;"¹ " *Washed in baptism from the filthiness of sin*;"² " Not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly, *after that we are baptized or justified*."³

You are also aware that in the compilation of our Book of Common Prayer, Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Latimer and Ridley were the principal agents, martyred witnesses for the truth, who in their discourses confirm the doctrines embodied in our Prayer Book and Homilies, and thus more fully show what were the doctrinal views of the English Reformers. In a sermon published by Cranmer in 1548, after declaring the second birth to be " spiritual, whereby our inward man and mind is renewed by the Holy Ghost, so that our hearts and minds receive new desires, which they had not of their first birth," he affirms that this " *second birth is by the water of baptism*, which Paul calleth the bath of regeneration, because *our sins be forgiven us in baptism*, and the *Holy Ghost is poured into us as into God's beloved children*, so that by the power and working of the *Holy Ghost we be born again spiritually, and made new creatures*; and so by baptism we enter the kingdom of God, and shall be saved forever, if we continue to our lives' end in the faith of Christ."

In one of Latimer's sermons is this assertion: " *We wash out remission of our sins by baptism*;" while Ridley in his work against Transubstantiation, declares, that " *in baptism the soul is cleansed from all filth by the Holy Ghost*."

Bishop Hooper lived at the same time with the authors of our doctrinal standards, whose opinions I have just quoted: his declarations are equally clear and positive; for in his Articles upon the Creed, he says, " Baptism is the entry of the Church, a washing into a new birth, and a renewing of the Holy Ghost. *By this baptism*

¹ Hom. of Salvation II. P.

² Hom. for Good Friday.

³ Hom. of Salvation, III. P.

we are changed and altered from children of wrath, of sin, of the devil, and of destruction, into the children of God, of grace, and of salvation."

These several extracts exhibit with sufficient plainness, surely, the teaching of the Protestant Episcopal Church on the subject of baptism three centuries since. Has this authorized teaching ever been changed? Not in the least; but through the preserving mercy of God remains just as it was when the compilers of our Liturgy sealed their testimony with their blood.

Of the distinguished part Bishop White bore in the organization of our American Church, I hardly need remind you, or of the deference which is so generally given to his opinions; and yet he not only held the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, but has explained and defended it very much at large in his Lectures on the Catechism, and in his Comparative View of the Calvinistic and Arminian Controversy. In his Lectures there occurs this remark: "One prominent property of the Catechism is its affirming that all persons, duly introduced into the Church of Christ by baptism — there being repentance and faith in adults, and a reasonable prospect of religious education in the case of infants — are made Christians in the true and proper sense of the terms; that they are not merely, as some say, members of the visible Church, but that *they are*, according to a familiar phrase of known meaning, *in a state of grace.*"

I would also refer you to the opinion of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. J. B. Summer, who, in his Apostolical Preaching, thus remarks: "Our Church considers baptism as conveying regeneration."

To our authorized standards I thus appeal, in justification of my own views, and to these founders and dignitaries of our Church, to show that in this matter I do not differ from my superiors, as well as to exhibit their understanding of this much debated subject. You seem surprised and grieved that I should adhere to the reviled and unpopular doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration; but at present this is my defence: *The Church, of which I am a Presbyter, teaches it;* and at my ordination I most solemnly promised to "give my faithful diligence, always so to minister the *doctrine and sacraments* of Christ, as this Church hath received them, so that I may teach the people committed to my cure and charge, with all diligence to keep and observe the same."

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER II.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION TAUGHT BY THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

— Rectory, January 31, 185—.

MY DEAR SIR:—

In my communication yesterday, I defended my adherence to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, by appealing to the standards of our Church, and by citing the opinions of some of her most eminent divines. Another important question now presents itself: IS BAPTISMAL REGENERATION TAUGHT BY THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH? FOR SHE IS AN INFALLIBLE WITNESS TO THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE PREVALENT IN THE FIRST AGES OF THE GOSPEL.

For the fact that the Primitive Church held the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, I might easily multiply testimony; but as that of *Justin Martyr*, in the middle of the second century, when the doctrine of the universal Church, in whose behalf he writes, and therefore whose faith he exhibits, could not have been corrupted from the original Scriptural model, is amply sufficient, I will at present content myself with quoting what he says on this subject in his First Apology:—

“ We will state in what manner we are created anew by Christ. As many as are persuaded and believe that the things which we teach and declare are true, and promise that they are determined to live accordingly, are taught to pray, and to beseech God with fasting, to grant them remission of their past sins, while we also pray and fast with them. We then lead them to a place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were; for they are then washed in that water in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit; for Christ said, ‘ Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ ”¹

“ The Apostles have also taught us for what reason this new birth is necessary: That we may no longer remain the children of necessity or of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and judgment, and may obtain in the water remission of the sins which we have before committed, the name of God the Father is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again, and hath repented of his sins; he who leads him to be washed in the laver of baptism, saying this” [the baptismal formula.] “ This washing is called illumination.”²

¹ First Apology of Justin Martyr, Standard Works, vol. iv, p. 183, § 79.

² Ib. p. 184, § 80.

"This food is called by us the Eucharist; of which no one may partake unless he believes that what we teach is true, and is washed in the laver, which is appointed for the forgiveness of sins and unto regeneration."¹

These words of Justin Martyr are of so much importance, that to them I wish to direct your special attention. In the year of our Lord 150, Justin, in a letter addressed to the reigning Roman emperors, defends his persecuted Christian brethren. He therefore speaks not merely for himself, but in the name and by the authority of the whole body of Christians at that early period. *The fact that his public letter in their behalf was permitted by them to descend to subsequent ages with their approval, stamps the document with the sanction of the entire Christian world as then existing.* Hence the testimony of Justin is the testimony of all his Christian brethren in the middle of the second century.

His testimony in the passages to which I have invited your special notice, relates to two classes of objects; the religious practices of his fellow-Christians, and the doctrines which they held. But observe; his mention of doctrines is entirely *incidental*, and therefore, as testimony the more valuable, because the more spontaneous and unconstrained. He is not, in this portion of his apology certainly, writing a treatise on Christian dogmatics, but simply stating what were the modes universally prevalent in his day, of administering the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and of conducting divine worship. He thus begins his "explanation:" "We will state also *in what manner* we are created anew by Christ," etc. (§ 79), and so throughout the whole description he proceeds in the form of narrative; consequently, all that he reveals to us concerning Christian doctrine, is *purely incidental*, and for this reason, the more important as evidence.

I will now ask the question, From what sources did Justin and his companions in tribulation, obtain their knowledge of Christian doctrine? Doubtless from the inspired Scriptures, and from the lips of living teachers. But who were the teachers of Christians in the middle of the second century? Who, but men, some of whom at least, had been instructed in the recent revelation by Apostles themselves. St. John did not die till after the close of the first century, so that he was still alive when Justin was born, who, in express terms, calls himself "a disciple of the Apostles." When, then, this Martyr was converted to the Christian faith, there must have been many a Bishop, and many a Presbyter, still in the vigorous exercise of his official duties, who had seen the venerable Apostle, and conversed with him concerning the newly established kingdom of God.

² First Apol. of Justin Martyr, Standard Works, vol. iv, p. 189, § 86.

The stream of Apostolic teaching was in the days of Justin and his associates, still flowing pure and unchanged, and from its waters both he and they were habitually drinking, and from their daily draughts were constantly deriving illumination and refreshment. The age of Justin was still a season of heavenly light, for though the Apostles, like so many suns, had all descended below the horizon, yet so recently had they departed, that the divine splendor they had received still shone brightly and strongly upon every Christian eye. Accordingly, *the testimony of Justin and of the whole Christian world which he represents, is worthy of our unlimited and fullest confidence.* Indeed, it seems to me, that as intelligent beings, who, by the very possession of the gift of our reason from the hand of God, are bound to follow evidence wherever it is found and wherever it may lead, we are under imperative and sacred obligation to submit, without reserve, our minds to the doctrinal teaching of Justin, not indeed in itself abstractly considered, but because it comes to us in the form of unquestionable and irrefutable testimony to matters of fact.

What, then, is the testimony of Justin and of the entire Christian body, in whose name and by whose authority he speaks, relating to the doctrines of the Gospel universally received in their days?

What does the Church universal in the middle of the second century testify concerning the sacrament of *Baptism*? Her testimony is to this effect:—

1. The baptized person is *illuminated*: “This washing is called illumination, etc.”¹ “We make common prayers for him who is now enlightened.” (§ 85.)

2. The baptized person *receives remission of sins*. “He is washed in the laver which is appointed for the forgiveness of sins.” (§ 86.) “That we may obtain in the water, remission of sins which we have before committed, the name of the Father, etc., is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again.” (§ 80.)

3. The person baptized is *born again, regenerated, created anew by Christ*. “The name of the Father, etc., is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again.” (§ 80.) “We lead them to a place where there is water, and there they are regenerated in the same manner as we also were.” (§ 79.) “He is washed in the laver which is appointed unto regeneration.” (§ 86.) “We will state in what manner we are created anew by Christ.” (§ 79.)

It is very important here to notice that the Church in the middle of the second century, in testifying that the person baptized was illuminated, forgiven, and born again, regenerated, created anew

¹ Justin Martyr's First Apology, § 80.

by Christ, also shows us what *interpretation* she had received from the Apostles, of certain passages of Scripture.

Justin, in § 79, refers the well-known words of our blessed Lord, in John 3 : 3, 5, " Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," to water-baptism.

It is also beyond all question that the Church Catholic in the middle of the second century, understood *literally*, Mark 1 : 4, " The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins ; " Acts 2 : 38, " Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ; " 22 : 16, " Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins ; " and Titus 3 : 5, " He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost ; " thus connecting remission of sins and regeneration with baptism, and fixing the meaning of the passages, and likewise establishing a very valuable principle of interpretation : THAT THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE ARE TO BE TAKEN, WHEN THEY CAN BE, IN THEIR NATURAL AND OBVIOUS SIGNIFICATION.¹

Beginning with Augustine in the fifth century, and subsequently enlarged by Calvin and his followers, and within the present century applied by Dr. Thomas Scott to the interpretation of the whole Bible, a theological system has arisen which is diametrically opposed to the teaching of the universal Church in the period in which Justin flourished. This *modern* system, though it did not at first, has at length proceeded to disparage the sacraments ; making baptism at least, little or nothing more than a mere ceremony. *The two opposing systems cannot be reconciled.* IF ONE BE TRUE, THE OTHER IS FALSE. If Dr. Scott be right in detaching forgiveness and regeneration from baptism, then the early Church, the church which still enjoyed the reflected light of the Apostles' personal instructions, was in most grievous error. COULD IT HAVE POSSIBLY BEEN ? You well know what my answer to this question would be. I have answered already, and have taken my position with the primitive Church. I trust and pray, my very dear sir, that you will ever stand there with me. I can readily understand, and I think in some good measure appreciate, the difficulty you encounter in admitting this reproached and ridiculed verity, for I have myself felt in my own case this difficulty most sensibly ; and it was not till I ceased to take the *opinions* of commentators and divines, and yielded my mind to the infallible

¹ "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." — *Hooker, Eccl. Polity, B. V. c. 59, §2.*

guidance of the *testimony* of the first and purest ages, that I was emancipated from the opposite system, and found peace and comfort in adopting the faith of the Catholic Church. You have been trained in a school, which unfortunately more lightly esteems than we do, antiquity, the Church, the sacraments, and the ministry; and it is hard indeed to unlearn the teaching of so many years; but, my dear sir, does not the deference, which you and every other person are bound to pay to primitive testimony, (*testimony*, by the way, by which alone we can ascertain what are truly the revealed Scriptures,) as well as regard for the truth of God, the *whole* truth, and not such portions as we may prefer, require you to place yourself in this better and more profitable school, the school of early saints and confessors, of martyrs and Apostles, and of our Lord himself? ALL THINGS SHOULD BE SACRIFICED TO TRUTH. That God in his mercy may give you and me, and all whom we love, grace ever to make this bounden sacrifice, and that we all may find in the bosom and communion of the Church, which is the sure keeper and unerring witness of the truth as it is in Jesus, peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost, and thus be fitted for the glories of the Church triumphant, I shall not cease to pray.

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER III.

STATEMENTS OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES.

— — — — *Rectory, February 5, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR: —

Accept my thanks for your prompt reply to my communications of last week, as your letter furnishes evidence that the important subject you have introduced to my notice continues to occupy your serious attention. Truth is elicited by examination and discussion, and I cannot but believe that we shall so far be agreed in doctrinal faith as ever to walk together most harmoniously.

I am glad to read in your letter these words: "I receive the doctrine of baptism as it is stated in the Westminster Catechism," as we now stand upon some common ground, so that when we ascertain what this is, we can, I trust, easily adjust and remove the other differences. As you have referred me to the Westminster Catechism, I open its pages, and there read as follows: "Question

161. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?" According then, to this catechism, "the doctrine of which you receive," the sacraments are *effectual* means of salvation. The answer to the 164th question, declares *Baptism* to be one of the sacraments. Then, according to the teaching of the Westminster Catechism, *Baptism is an effectual means of salvation*, and this "doctrine you receive."

In answer 177, we are told that "baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that, *even to infants*."

In the Shorter Catechism, answer 92 affirms that "in a sacrament, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and *applied* to believers," while answer 95 teaches, that the infants of such as are members of the Church are to be baptized.

Here, then, is "the doctrine of baptism which *you receive*:" **BAPTISM IS AN EFFECTUAL MEANS OF SALVATION TO BELIEVERS AND THEIR CHILDREN; IN BAPTISM, TO BOTH ARE APPLIED CHRIST AND THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW COVENANT.**

If this is not the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, I am utterly unable to understand and interpret language. As you "receive this doctrine of baptism," so do I most fully, with the exception that I cannot limit baptism and its benefits to the children of believers. We may surely congratulate ourselves that we are of one mind on these important points:— Baptism is a means of salvation to believers and their children, and applies to both, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant. With the exception just mentioned, this is all I ask, this is all I contend for, as it meets the language of our Baptismal Service, and the language of the Scriptures on this subject; and I may add, that with the limitation already stated, the words of the Westminster Catechisms will satisfy every Protestant Episcopal clergyman in Christendom. All that we maintain, and for the maintaining of which we have heaped upon us such constant and unmeasured abuse and obloquy, is, that baptism when rightly received, is not a mere sign, but a means of salvation,¹ and an effectual means, and that it applies, not only to believers and their children, but to all children, (since our Saviour does not allow us to "forbid" any from coming to him,) Christ and the benefits of the new covenant; benefits which are, according to the Westminster Catechism itself (A. 165), "ingrafting into Christ, remission of sins

¹ "A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, as a means whereby we receive the same." — Catechism of Prot. Epis. Church.

"Sacraments ordained of Christ are certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, by the which God doth work invisibly in us." — XXV. Article of Religion.

by his blood, regeneration by his Spirit, adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life." Between yourself then, and the Protestant Episcopal Church, there is, according to your own profession, but this single difference : the extent to which Infant Baptism shall be administered. You would restrict its application to the children of believers ; the Church would, in obedience to the command of her Sovereign Head, bring, if possible, all into the arms of his mercy. I trust you will not condemn the Church for being like her compassionate Lord, thus charitable, and for being thus dutiful to him.

After your declaration, "I receive the doctrine of Baptism as it is stated in the Westminster Catechism," by the adoption of which, as your confession of faith, you yield almost every ground of controversy between us, save that concerning the limitation of Infant Baptism, it seems nearly superfluous to reply to what you say in the remaining portions of your letter: but as you misunderstand me in some instances; do injustice to Justin Martyr as a witness, the only character in which I introduced him; interpret important texts of Scripture in a way that sound criticism does not warrant; and raise objections to the baptismal system which deserve to be answered, I shall feel obliged to trouble you perhaps once and again.

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER IV.

JUSTIN MARTYR A COMPETENT WITNESS.

— — — *Rectory, February 6, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR :

The next thing in your communication which it is necessary for me to consider, is your attempt to *destroy the character of Justin Martyr as a witness.* After occupying a sheet in examining his Apology and the opinions he has there expressed, you pronounce this sentence upon him : "His testimony would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal." To this very remarkable conclusion you bring yourself by a two-fold process; by disparaging his competency as a witness, and by confounding his opinions with his testimony.

You endeavor to disparage *his competency as a witness;* and to this end, you thus remark : "In the time of Justin Martyr, Christianity was spread over all the East, and Spain, France, Germany and England. A very wide extent to be canvassed in order to

ascertain what was the universal, or even the general state of opinion, or of fact. The means, too, of communication, were few and tardy ; no posts, no newspapers, no regular system of carriage ; no periodical conventions, anniversaries, or other means of the centralization of knowledge, even at Rome itself. Justin Martyr, moreover, was never even there, that we hear of ; but lived and died in a remote province, a conquered and down-trodden and partially depopulated corner of the Empire ; and not even in the capital city of that province. What, I ask, were his means of knowing what was *universally* held, or *generally* believed, among all the Christians of the world ? Verily, the testimony of a witness so circumstanced, on such a question, would be deemed of very little worth, even in our county courts."

To these assertions of yours permit me to reply. With regard to the "spread of Christianity *over all* the East, and Spain, France, Germany, and England," at so early a period as little more than a century after the death of our Lord, the period when Justin flourished, there is some reason to doubt. Mosheim, describing the extent to which the Gospel had been disseminated at the *end* of the second century, and referring for his authority to Irenæus and Tertullian, who both lived some fifty years later than Justin, expresses himself much more moderately. "In *nearly* all the East, and *among* the Germans, the Spaniards, the Celts, the Britons, and other nations, Christ was now worshipped as God."¹

The commonly received opinion is, as you may see by consulting Mosheim in the subsequent sections of this same chapter, that Christianity was not introduced into France till about A. D. 150, and *from thence* extended into the portions of Germany bordering upon the South-West bank of the Rhine, and also into Britain ; though the Gospel was most probably in this island at an earlier date. Christianity, then, in the time of Justin, instead of being "spread *over all* Spain, France, Germany, and England," scarcely existed at all in these countries, and only in a very few places ; while even in the East, its extension was not absolutely universal. "The very *wide* extent to be canvassed" by Justin "in order to ascertain what was the universal, or even the general state of opinion, or of fact," is not, after all, so "*very wide*," as you represent. How could "Christianity have been spread over all the East, and Spain, France, Germany, and England," when "the means of communication were few and tardy," and when there were "no posts, no newspapers, no printing, no regular system of carriage," and when, we may add, the Gospel everywhere encountered the sternest

¹ B. I. Cent. II., Part 1, c. 1, § 3.

opposition from the pagan and barbarous people? We may rest assured, therefore, that Justin Martyr was not obliged to canvass the wide extent of the Transalpine portions of the Roman Empire in order to ascertain what was then the universal, or even the general state of opinion or of fact; for possibly there were there no Christian opinions to be canvassed, and no facts respecting Christians to be ascertained.

What were Justin Martyr's opportunities of becoming acquainted with the views and practices of Christians in the *Central and Eastern* districts of the Empire of the Cesars? You say, "Justin Martyr was never in Rome; but *lived and died* in a remote province, a conquered and down-trodden and partially depopulated *corner* of the Empire; and not even in the capital city of that province."

This "remote corner of the Empire" was no other than Palestine itself; not so "remote" from Rome, but that her dominion extended many hundred miles still further East; nor exactly a "corner," either, when we recollect the wonderful events which had so recently transpired in this land of marvels; the miraculous establishment of Christianity, and the subjugating wars waged against the Jews by the Roman Emperors, Vespasian and Titus. The Holy Land was no "corner" in St. Paul's days; for in his address before king Agrippa, he expressly affirms, "This thing;" the divine introduction of the Gospel into the world, "was not done in a *corner*;" nor has this land been "a corner" in *any* subsequent period.

Nor was the birth-place of Justin (Flavia Neapolis, the Sychar of the New Testament), any mean city, but large and flourishing, very early the seat of a Christian Church, and soon after, the residence of a Christian Bishop; proofs of which you may see in Robinson's Biblical Researches in Palestine. If, then, Justin Martyr had lived and died in Neapolis, as you assert he did, his means of understanding the truths of the Gospel would not have been small.

But *did he live and die* in his native city? So far from this, that we are told in his biography¹ "he gratified his ardor for the acquisition of knowledge *by travel*; visited Alexandria; about the beginning of the reign of Antoninus Pius *fixed his abode in Rome*, where, about A. D. 165, he was beheaded for refusing to worship the gods of the Romans, and for avowing his faith in the doctrines of Christianity."

Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History,² likewise states that

¹ Standard Works, IV. pp. 44-51.

² B. 4, c. 11, 12, 16, 17, 18.

Justin, though a native of the new city of Palestine, "had his residence at Rome, where he also suffered martyrdom."

Instead, then, of "living and dying in Palestine," Justin Martyr had visited Egypt and Italy, and passed several years in the imperial city itself. Surely a man who had travelled in Asia, in Africa, and in Europe, must have known not a little of the religion of which he was an open professor and a public defender, and been fully competent to give his testimony concerning the doctrines and usages of his fellow-Christians. Previously to addressing his First Apology to the Roman Emperors, the treatise in which is his description of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, he had in a published book defended the Christian faith against heresies; so that in order adequately to appreciate the character of Justin as a most trustworthy witness, we must bear in mind that he was, in the age in which he lived, the acknowledged champion of revealed truth. He was no mere novice, no cloistered hermit, no ignorant dreamer, no unlettered rustic, who had never wandered beyond the place of his nativity, no obscure private man, without knowledge and without opportunities of acquiring adequate information; but a learned and observing Christian traveller, who had visited the most central and important parts of the Roman empire, had conversed with Christian Bishops and clergy and people of various countries, and had for many years witnessed their religious rites and worship, and in these habitually united, and for a long period had been at Rome the chosen and approved expositor of the faith universally received by the followers of the Lord. Such a man could not have been an incompetent witness, but in the *highest sense* qualified to furnish the testimony he has delivered. *If Justin Martyr was not a competent witness, there never has been one; and there is an end of all certainty, except the little each individual may gather from his own observation and experience.* Men in these days, finding their novel views conflicting with his established facts, may strive to disparage the character and weaken the evidence of this martyred saint; but he was not so treated by the early Church, nor will he be thus used by the present Church, when its members shall discover, that in assailing the testimony of Justin, they assault the very basis of our Reformed Faith; nay, that they besiege the very foundations of Christianity itself. How differently was he once regarded! And happy will it be for the Church of Christ, when he shall again be esteemed and studied as he was esteemed and studied "in the old time before us." Only hear Eusebius speak of the man, whose very credibility is now sometimes called in question. "*Justin was the most noted of those who flourished in those times, who in the guise of a philosopher, preached the truth of God, and*

contended for the faith in his writings. So valuable and worthy of study were these works esteemed by the ancients, that Irenæus quotes him often." Justin "preaches the truth of God;" may the God whose truth he preaches, ever incline us to receive, obey, and defend this truth, whatever may be the sacrifices our fidelity may cost us.

Very truly and affectionately yours.

LETTER V.

OPINIONS OF JUSTIN NOT IDENTICAL WITH HIS TESTIMONY.

— — — *Rectory, February 8, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR:—

In relation to Justin Martyr, it remains for me to notice your attempt to disparage his competency as a witness *by confounding his opinions with his testimony.*

In doing this, you have in several instances attributed to him error, when, according to my apprehension, he was entirely innocent of the charge.

You say of his opinions in general, "Doubtless his doctrinal views were deeply colored with the philosophical notions in which he was steeped to the lips." His entire *Apology* I have read most carefully in reference to this very accusation, and yet I am able to discover very little if any trace of the tinge which you assert his former philosophy imparted to his conceptions of revealed truth. On the contrary, as we learn from Eusebius, one of Justin's books was written expressly for the purpose of *refuting the opinions of the Greek philosophers*; while Justin himself, in the twenty-seventh section of his *First Apology*, expressly rejects the Stoic philosophy.

But you refer to several expressions of his, in order to sustain the position you take against him.

1. Justin, you remark, "believed that Jesus Christ was to be worshipped only in the '*second place*' and '*after* the eternal and unchangeable God;' that he is only '*the principal power AFTER God the Father.*'" (§§ 16, 41.) But in all this, Justin does not affirm that the *nature* of the Son is in any way inferior to that of the Father, but all he asserts may be the simple fact, that in the New Testament the inspired writers, when speaking of the three persons of the Trinity, mention the Son in the "*second place.*" Thus our Saviour himself, in sending his Apostles to make disciples

of all nations, commanded them to baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son," in this way "giving the second place" to the Son. After the same Scriptural model we say in the Catechism, "We believe *secondly* in God the Son;" while in the Te Deum, and everywhere else in our Liturgy, we worship the Son, in the "second place" or order, or "after" the Father, in reference to the succession of time in which we offer our worship. In this instance, then, there is in Justin's language neither Greek philosophy, nor heterodoxy, but simple conformity to the Scriptural form of presenting to us the three persons of the Godhead.

2. Justin, you say, "believed that the Son is "the Word, or *Reason*, of which *all men are partakers*." (§ 61.) The word Reason was added by the translator in order to explain what he supposed was the meaning of the term Word; and therefore we may reject his explanation; and then the words of Justin will be parallel to those of St. John: "This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

3. Justin, you assert, "assimilates the Christian doctrine to the views held by the Greek philosophers." (§ 28.) What if he does *in the particulars which he mentions*? He merely states that the Platonists, Stoics, and the Greek and Roman poets and philosophers generally, held some opinions which are similar to certain truths believed by Christians. Is it not a fact? If so, where is the harm in Justin's saying so?

4. Justin, you affirm, "states that some of the prophecies of Christ were delivered *five thousand years before his advent*." (§ 39.) But may not the numbers here have been altered by the error of a transcriber? It is by means of this supposition alone, that we are able to reconcile many conflicting statements in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and shall we not deal as leniently with Justin as we do with the sacred writers? Then again, chronology had not been studied and settled in Justin's day, as it has since, so that if transcribers have committed no mistakes with his numerals, we may say, he being not an inspired man, employed the best means of chronological information within his reach.

5. Justin, you state, "applies to Christ, Gen. 49: 11; and to show how the expression 'binding his colt to a vine,' was fulfilled, he informs us, that the ass's colt, which Jesus sent his disciples to bring to him, was actually *bound to a vine!*" (§§ 40, 41.)

The connection between the 10th and 11th verses of Gen. 49 is such, that the 'binding' *may*, to say the least, be as naturally referred to Shiloh as to Judah, so that on grammatical grounds, Justin may not be wrong in applying the latter verse as well as the former to Christ. This application of the verse Rosenmüller men-

tions as one adopted by Christian interpreters, and even Henry approves of this explanation. So, in substance, Adam Clarke and Hale, quoted by him; also Scott allows that the passage may be referred to our Saviour, and likewise, A. Fuller. The assertion of Justin, that the ass's colt, for which our Lord sent his disciples, was bound to a vine, I presume neither yourself nor any other man can ever disprove.

6. Justin, you observe, "erroneously ascribes to Moses, what Moses never wrote." (§§ 43, 56.) The Martyr oftentimes, no doubt, quoted from memory; and as memory in him, as in all other men, was treacherous, he sometimes quoted amiss. But such a common infirmity of our humanity deserves not to be pronounced an "error."

7. Justin, you note, "interprets the 'government' in Isa. 9 : 6, which 'shall be upon his shoulder' to mean 'the power of the cross,' against which Christ placed his shoulder when he was crucified." (§§ 45, 72.)

That our Lord placed his shoulder against the Cross when he was crucified, is a fact which cannot be denied. But the word Cross has a twofold meaning; one literal, the other spiritual; the one indicating a wooden instrument of torture and death, the other, the meritorious sacrifice of the Son of God offered upon the literal Cross. By the power of the Cross, I understand Justin to refer to the sacrifice, and not to the wooden instrument; and if this is his reference, then has the Cross power indeed, for St. Paul declares, that by it, we are crucified unto the world, and the world unto us. Respecting the passage in Isa. 9 : 6, Justin says, "This is a prophecy of the power of the Cross," thus asserting that the government the predicted child would wield, would be by means of his powerful Cross. How does this differ from our Saviour's own words, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to me?"

8. You urge still another objection. "The passage, 'I have spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people,' Isa. 65 : 2, which St. Paul, in Rom. 10 : 21, regards as a rebuke to the stubbornness of the Jews, Justin says was fulfilled when '*the hands of Jesus were stretched out*, at the time he was crucified by the Jews who spake against him.'" (§ 45.)

In the section to which you refer, Justin is quoting several prophecies; first he cites that in Isaiah 65 : 2; then Isaiah 58 : 2; and having made these citations from Isaiah, he thus proceeds: "In other words he" (Jesus) "saith by another prophet, 'They pierced my feet and my hands,'" etc. Having thus quoted Ps. 22 : 16, he then comments: "Now David" (not Isaiah) "the king and prophet who said thus, suffered none of these things; but the

hands of Jesus Christ were stretched out when he was crucified by the Jews, who spake against him, and said that he was not the Christ ; for as the *prophet said*" (here referring to Isaiah as first cited) "they in derision, placed him upon a judgment-seat, and said, 'Judge over us ;' thus 'gainsaying' and deriding him." It appears to me that taking Justin for his own interpreter, we cannot justly affirm that he applies Isaiah 65 : 2, to the *crucifixion* of our Lord, since he *contrasts* his sufferings with *David's* exemption from suffering, thus *excluding* Isaiah from his comments ; and, moreover, refers Isaiah 65 : 2, to the proceedings in the hall of Pilate. But had he not expressly limited his comment to one whom he places in contrast with *David*, the connection of *thought*, which ought to determine the *real reference*, is plainly between the comment and the *Psalm*, and *not* as you suppose, between the comment and the prophet.

9. But you discover an additional fault. Justin "magnifies the *sign of the Cross*, observing 'how *impossible* it is that *anything* in the world should be *regulated*, or any mutual intercourse carried on, without employing this figure ;' instancing the masts and yards of vessels, the plough and other implements of labor, and even the human figure, with its erect spine and outstretched arms !" (§ 72.)

I suppose the fact cannot be gainsayed, that nothing in the world can be regulated or carried on, unless straight lines are made to cross each other. Justin truly says, "The Cross is the greatest sign of his (Christ's) might and dominion ;" for the Cross is a sign of his efficacious sacrifice, by which alone our sins are cancelled and our souls crucified from sin ; and then the Martyr with great simplicity informs us that we can see crosses, or right lines crossing each other, in everything ; but further he saith not, and therefore that he makes any superstitious or any dangerous application of these facts I cannot perceive.

10. Once more you object. "Justin says, 'that they who, under the sanction of human laws, marry again, are sinners.' " (§ 18.)

The Martyr quotes Matt. 5 : 28, "Whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her," etc., and also Matt. 5 : 32, "Whosoever marrieth a wife that is put away from another man, committeth adultery ;" and then thus remarks, "Hence they who, under the sanction of human laws marry again, and they who look on a woman and lust after her, are sinners in the sight of our Master." Plainly his decision with regard to the sinfulness of second marriages is not a *general* one, but a decision *limited by the conditions he himself has mentioned* : *a second marriage when the wife had been put away by a former husband*.

11. "Justin," you add, "puts forth the legend about 'the

seventy' being shut up in different cells, by Ptolemy, to translate the Scriptures, as real verity." (§ 38 and note.)

I will transcribe Justin's words relating to Ptolemy's obtaining the Jewish Scriptures: "When Ptolemy, king of Egypt, was forming his library, he heard of prophecies in the Hebrew language, and sent to Herod" (Eleazer) "who then ruled over the Jews, desiring that the books of the prophecies might be sent to him; and the king sent them written in their aforesaid Hebrew language. But since what was thus written in them could not be understood by the Egyptians, he again sent, and desired him to send men to translate them into the Greek language. This being done, the books have remained with the Egyptians even to this day; and they are also with all the Jews in every place."

There is nothing here about "the seventy," nor "the cells," though in a work ascribed to Justin, there is. There is then some doubt, so I perceive in Murdock's Mosheim, whether Justin ever "put forth the legend about the cells and the seventy." But allowing that he did, he has in common with all the Christians of his time, yielded to the temptation in their disputes with the Jews, of believing a very silly story. The reputed translation took place two centuries before the Christian era, and was therefore a transaction about which the early Christians could have no personal knowledge; but as Philo, *the Jew*, records the wonderful exploit, we may cease to marvel that the disciples of Christ, who were not infallible, were ignorant of translations, and also lived so near the age of miracles, should too readily believe his plausible account.

I have thus examined the eleven exceptions you make to the opinions of Justin, and having striven to canvass them with candor and impartiality, I ask, Do these opinions deserve to be pronounced as you pronounce them, "puerilities and errors?" It is not certain that he has misapplied a single passage of Scripture; while in all the cases where he is mistaken, he is misled, not by his judgment, or by his imagination, but by the sources of information which were the best any man of his time could command.

The opinions then of Justin are not as erroneous as you endeavor to make them; and consequently his competency as a witness, so far as this could be affected by the erroneousness of his opinions, remains uninjured.

But as I do not depend upon the opinions of Justin, why should I have gone into an examination of his views, to which you object? Simply, to show that upon *your own ground*, there is *very much less* reason for disparaging his testimony than you maintain. What if Justin was as fanciful and erroneous as you pronounce him to be, I might still inquire with Archbishop Wake, Is a man *out of his*

senses because he is out of his judgment? I appeal to Justin as a witness to certain facts, and having employed him as such, I have not necessarily anything to do either with the falsity or the correctness of his opinions. When he wrote his description of the manner in which the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were administered in his days, he had been a Christian for at least *five and twenty years*; and as he had eyes he must have known what he saw, and as he had ears he must have also known what he heard, whenever a person was baptized, and whenever the holy Communion was celebrated. For this knowledge, which he obtained from the evidence of his senses, I inquire; caring not, in this connection of the argument, what his own views were concerning the two Sacraments. This knowledge of his, derived from the testimony of his sight and hearing, I wish to consider a little more fully. But as this investigation would extend my present communication to an undue length, I must here conclude, by assuring you that I am as ever,

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER VI.

VALUE OF JUSTIN MARTYR'S TESTIMONY.

— — — Rectory, February 14, 185—.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Having endeavored to remove your objections to the testimony of Justin on the ground of the erroneousness of his opinions, by showing that the exceptions you make to his statements are untenable, I wish now to say a few words on his character as a witness.

In his account of the Sacrament of Baptism, we may in the first instance consider Justin as delivering such testimony as he had acquired merely from *the evidence of his senses*.

In the course of *the quarter of a century* he had been a Christian when he wrote his First Apology, he must have very often witnessed the administration of Baptism; and consequently must have *heard* what was then said by the officiating minister; since from other sources we learn that whenever this Sacra^{gnt} was administered, certain expressions were invariably employed, besides the formula expressly appointed by our Saviour; questions were asked, and answers returned; prayers no doubt were offered; and perhaps an address was delivered by the baptizing clergyman. The language used on baptismal occasions, must have described the *nature*

of the Sacrament, *the benefits* conferred, as well as the obligations assumed. Baptism, moreover, must have been a subject of ministerial comment and instruction at other seasons, so that an intelligent man could not have associated with Christians for the long period of twenty-five years, and not know from the oft-repeated evidence of his *hearing* what was the universal teaching on so common a topic. We do not here ask what were Justin's own views in this matter, but we simply listen to the report he brings us, that wherever he went, and this for more than a score of years, he heard but one language respecting Baptism; that it was everywhere called an "enlightening," and that in all cases "remission of sins, regeneration, and creation anew in Christ," were connected with the administration of this Sacrament.

Such is the first aspect in which Justin presents himself as a witness, reporting not his own *opinions*, but *the testimony of his senses*; and a witness both honest and competent; for he sealed his sincerity with his blood, and establishes his competency by the facts, that now fifty years old he had been a Christian since his twenty-third year, had travelled extensively, was a learned and observing man, and had spent a large portion of this period in the city of Rome itself, the seat of an Apostolic and flourishing Church, where he had been mostly engaged in openly defending Christianity against the assaults and perversions of its enemies.

But his character as a witness now assumes a much more elevated position; for he addresses us not as a private individual, though most worthy in this respect of our entire confidence, but as *the chosen representative of the whole Christian body of the period in which he wrote*. He speaks not in his own name, but in theirs, and *the bare fact that they permitted him thus to speak, shows that they approved his statements*. To quote the adage you cited in another connection, *Qui tacet, cum loqui debet, consentire videtur*: He that is silent, *when he ought to speak*, seems to consent. The Christian world of Justin's age were silent when they ought to have spoken, in case he testified falsely; they did not contradict his assertions, and therefore they *consent to the correctness of these assertions*, and consequently *his testimony becomes theirs*. As a body of testimony, Justin's book is *the testimony of the Church universal in the middle of the second century*.

Yet you say, "His testimony would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal."

But if the testimony of Justin is of "the least possible weight" on the subject of Baptism, it is of "the least possible weight" on all other subjects.

In the same passage where he describes the administration of

Baptism, he gives his testimony concerning several other important matters ; so that if his evidence is worthless in one instance, it is of course worthless in all. Upon several interesting and fundamental questions, the statements of Justin in connection with Baptism are generally supposed to throw valuable and decisive light. For example :

1. Justin says (§§ 87, 89), " We all of us assemble together on Sunday, because on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead ;" and these words have ever been regarded as conclusively establishing the fact, that the early Christians considered the *first day* of the week, and not the *last*, as the Divinely appointed season of sacred rest. But you say, " The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and the *Seventh-Day Baptists* will thank you for your opinion.

2. Justin says, (§ 87) " On the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in one place of all who dwell either in towns or in the country ; and the *Memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets are read* ;" and this practice of the Church in Justin's time, all truly Catholic Christians consider as justifying the public reading of the Holy Scriptures on the Lord's Day. But you say, " The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and the *Quaker* who never reads the Bible in a public assembly, and the *Papist* who reads but *very meagre portions*, will each thank you for your opinion.

3. Justin says that in his day (§§ 85, 87) " the people expressed," at the close of the prayers, " their assent by saying *Amen* :" a response which the great majority of Christians, imitating this primitive custom, have ever uttered. But you say, " The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and *all congregations refusing to say Amen*, will thank you for your opinion.

4. Justin says (§§ 79, 85, 86, 87) that the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were universally administered in his day, and this fact is one reason why the Christian Church has in all ages observed these Sacraments, perceiving from the fact that the first Christians did not spiritualize them into nonentity, as some persons have since done. But you say, " The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and the *Quaker* will again thank you for your opinion.

5. Justin says (§§ 85, 87), " The Deacons give *each one a portion of wine*," as well as of bread, and this primitive observance true Catholics urge in opposition to the perversion of the Lord's Supper by the councils of Constance and Trent, whereby the Romish laity are deprived of the cup in this holy Sacrament. But you say,

"The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and *the Romanist* will thank you for your opinion.

6. Justin calls (§ 85) the elements in the Holy Supper, even after they had "been blessed," "*bread and wine;*" and this fact, true Catholics maintain, proves that the figment of Transubstantiation, or the change of *the substance* of bread and wine, was utterly unknown *even in the Church of Rome herself*, at the middle of the second century. But you say, "The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and *the Romanist* will again thank you for your opinion.

7. Justin says (§ 86), "This food is called by us the Eucharist" (or Thanksgiving), and upon this fact, true Catholics insist when they assert that the Primitive Church never entertained the "blasphemous fable" of the Priest's offering in the Lord's Supper a propitiatory sacrifice. But you say, "The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and *the Romanist* will the third time thank you for your opinion.

8. Justin says (§ 86), "We receive not these elements as *common* bread or *common* drink, but the food which is blessed by the prayer of the word which came from Him is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh:" language which warrants the assertion of the Anglican Catholics in their XXVIII. Article, "To such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ:" an assertion the very opposite of the freezing negation, first broached by Socinus, but now, I fear, adopted not only by his followers, but by very many calling themselves Orthodox. "In the Lord's Supper we receive *nothing* from the ordinance itself save bread and wine. Those who believe that they partake of the Lord's body and blood in the Supper, *though only in a spiritual way*, hold an opinion *fallacious and erroneous.*"¹ But you say, "The testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," and *the Rationalist* of whatever name will thank you for your opinion.

9. But if "the testimony of Justin would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal," precisely the same may be said, and with exactly as much justice, of the testimony of *every other* primitive witness; and thus by demolishing each early Father in succession, you demolish the entire testimony of the Church in the first ages of the Gospel. But when you have by this suicidal process relieved yourself of the Primitive Church, *how can you*

¹ F. Socinus, Works, I. p. 753. Racovian Catechism, Question 340.

prove that the Bible is the Word of God? Indeed, apart from the testimony of the early Church you cannot determine the Canon of the New Testament at all ; so that when you say, “The testimony of Justin” (and by parity of reasoning, of every other early Father) “would have the least possible weight in any human tribunal,” *the Deist* will, in company with the Quaker, the Romanist, and the Socinian, thank you for your opinion.

Above, I have called the disparagement of the testimony of the early Christians *a suicidal process*, and so most truly it is ; for if we renounce the *early witnessing Church*, there is no refuge for us, but in bald Deism, or in the assumption, that the *present Church* is herself inspired ; the very assumption of the Romanists themselves, and likewise their strong-hold, as well as their defence of their dogma of development ; and also I am sorry to say, the assumption of not a few, who call themselves Protestants. The fact is, neither genuine Catholicity, which is identical with genuine Protestantism, nor Christianity herself can be sustained, defended, and made triumphant upon any other basis than this adamantine rock : **THE TESTIMONY FURNISHED BY THE CHURCH IN THE FIRST AGES OF HER EXISTENCE.**

Yours, truly and affectionately.

LETTER VII.

THE CHURCH IN THE SECOND CENTURY UNCORRUPT.

— — — *Rectory, February 15, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR :—

But you say, “Either the Church in Justin’s day was corrupted, or he did not know what its doctrines were.”

Having already said so much in reference to Justin’s competency to testify concerning the doctrines of the Church in his time, it would be quite superfluous to add anything more on that point ; but as you propose another supposition, *the corruptness* of the early Church, I cannot refrain from subjoining a few remarks on that subject.

Well aware am I how eager some persons are to find corruptions in the Church of the first two or three centuries, and for this express purpose Mr. Isaac Taylor, of England, wrote his book entitled “*Ancient Christianity*.” How does he make out his case ?

By himself *corrupting* the words of the early writers!¹ The Homilies exhibit a very different teaching with regard to the condition of the primitive Church. For instance, in the Sermon against Peril of Idolatry, Part III, the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States pronounces this judgment concerning the early Church : “*The Primitive Church is specially to be followed, AS MOST INCORRUPT AND PURE.*” How could the Church of the first centuries have been otherwise than pure and uncorrupt ? Take the period when Justin flourished, what motive could the Church then have had to change her faith ? She was not allied with the State, was not identified in any way with any School of Philosophy, or with any religious body whatever, for she was persecuted by the civil power, by the Jews, by every form of paganism, and by every sect of philosophers ; in short, by the whole world. Corruption then could not have come into the Church *from without*. Could the deterioration have arisen from *within herself* ? That there were heresies in the first ages we well know, for so we are assured by the early Church herself, who *invariably condemns these heretical doctrines* ; thus showing how vigilant she was over the true faith, and how careful she was to preserve this faith intact and pure. On what ground does the Primitive Church condemn all false teaching ? On the ground of *its novelty*, declaring that such teaching was utterly unknown to her present professors, to their Fathers, and to the Apostles. The Church in Justin’s day must have still enjoyed the instructions of many a Bishop and other herald of the Cross, who had conversed personally with St. John, and could the Church have in their presence changed her faith, and they raised no word of remonstrance and condemnation ? The early Church then could not from any influences within herself have corrupted the faith she had received ; and consequently, *the fact that a doctrine existed, without censure and without reproof, is evidence that the truth is a portion of the doctrinal inheritance she derived from her inspired founders.*²

For my own part, therefore, I cannot perceive how either of the suppositions, the one, that Justin did not know what were the doctrines of the Church in his day ; the other, that the Church herself

¹ See Prof. Whittingham’s Letter to the Episcopal Recorder, Feb. 17, 1840.

² “Is it likely that such Churches and so many should have corrupted the faith precisely in the same way ? No event where many individuals are concerned, turns out precisely the same in the case of all. There would have been some difference in their doctrine, had it been corrupted ; that which is found the same among many, is not a corruption, but what was delivered to them.” — *Tertullian, De Praescr.* c. 28.

was doctrinally corrupt, can possibly be maintained ; and consequently, we shall, notwithstanding our prepossessions and prejudices against the doctrine, be compelled to admit that Baptismal Regeneration is a truth of the Gospel, a truth taught by Inspiration itself.

If the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration be a corruption of the Scriptural faith, it is the duty of those who make the assertion *to fix the time when* the error was first introduced. It is easy to find the period when the opposite dogma was propounded, and also who were its authors. *In the sixteenth century by the Socinians*, who define Sacraments to be mere “badges of a sacred covenant between God and man,” but in no respect channels or means of grace ; a defective and frigid view most pointedly condemned by our Article XXV. Here was the *first* denial of Baptismal Regeneration ; a denial which now, alas, is heard from the mouth of many an individual who considers himself as preëminently orthodox and evangelical !

We have already seen what is the teaching of the Westminster Divines on this subject ; and their views were but the echo of all the Protestant Confessions (save the Racovian) *without exception* ; the Church of England herself not exhibiting any statements concerning Baptism substantially different from those furnished by the standards of her Reformed brethren.

Thus stood the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration at the period of the Reformation ; all the Reformed maintained it ; none denied the doctrine save the little fragment of Socinians, who also denied the Lord who bought them.

From the sixteenth century upward to the very times of the Apostles, not a solitary voice, so far as I can discover, is lifted against the doctrine, but it is heard and taught everywhere, in Creeds, in Apologies, in Controversies, in Commentaries.

Hear Augustine in his controversy with Pelagius on “Original Sin.” “The hereditary disease in children is healed by his grace who makes them well by the laver of regeneration. Born in the flesh, subject to the sin and death of the first man, they are regenerated in Baptism to a connection with the righteousness and eternal life of the other man.”¹

Augustine is the Father, who, as you remind me, is styled by the Homilies, “*a Doctor of great authority* ;” authority which I shall not for slight reasons question. When, however, I discover the historical fact, that he is the author of the human dogma of predestination, I must dissent from his teaching in this particular at

¹ Augustine, De. Pec. Mer. I. 19. 16.

least, and adhere to the opposite doctrine of the earlier Fathers and the Scriptures themselves. His dogma of predestination, approved and refined by Calvin, and adopted by Dr. Scott and the Divines of his School, has produced an effect which Augustine did not foresee, the rejection of Baptismal Regeneration ; for since, according to the Predestination-theory, some infants are non-elect, these of course are never regenerated, either in Baptism or at any other time, and consequently the grace of Regeneration does not universally accompany the baptism of children.

The way is now clear I believe for me to review the Scriptural authority for the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, but as this letter is already sufficiently long, I must defer this review until another communication.

Yours, truly and affectionately.

LETTER VIII.

THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

— — — *Rectory, February 16, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR :—

After so protracted a journey over the fields of antiquity, I have at length been permitted by an indulgent Providence to reach APOSTOLIC AND SCRIPTURAL GROUND ; and as the Scriptures to which I shall refer you in proof of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration are few in number, the encouraging prospect is, that I shall soon cease to trespass upon your patience.

DOES THE WORD OF GOD TEACH BAPTISMAL REGENERATION ? This most important question I do not hesitate to answer in the affirmative, and in support of this assertion, I now appeal to the following declarations of the inspired volume.

1. “ John did baptize in the wilderness and preach *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*” Mark 1 : 4.

Upon this text you thus remark : “ It speaks of the Baptism of *repentance.* John called on the people to repent, and confess their sins, and forsake them, and in *token* thereof to come to his *ceremonial Baptism.*”

You call John’s Baptism “ *ceremonial* ; ” but it was not a *mere* ceremony, for the Evangelist expressly declares, that it was “ *for*

the remission of sins." Your comment on the passage *withholds* a portion of the truth St. Mark therein expresses; inasmuch as he connects Baptism *as much* with forgiveness of sins, as he connects Baptism with repentance. This connection you strive to dissolve. By what authority? What the Holy Spirit hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

On looking into the Westminster Catechism, "the doctrine of which on Baptism you receive," I find that Mark 1: 4 is adduced to prove that "Baptism is a sign and seal of remission of sins" (Answer 165), thus showing that the Divines who composed the Catechism understood the passage as I contend it should be understood, according to its grammatical sense; and according to this grammatical sense, it affirms that sins are forgiven in Baptism.

2. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, *Suffer little children to come unto me*, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark 10: 13-16.

On this passage you offer this comment: "It was only an instance, among others, in which our Saviour took occasion, from a passing occurrence, to inculcate an important lesson. When his disciples would have repelled those who brought little children to receive his blessing, he taught them, from the docility and implicit faith belonging to little children, with what sort of disposition they should receive the Gospel. It was *not* a Baptismal occasion, nor was Baptism alluded to."

I do not say that the occasion was a Baptismal one; but as you admit that "the little children received our Saviour's blessing," you admit all for which I insist; that his *conduct* on the occasion establishes certain fundamental principles in connection with Infant Baptism; principles which I will now enumerate.

As the passage itself *does not limit* the littleness of the children who were *brought*, and whom our Saviour *took up in his arms*, we are not at liberty to limit it; and therefore some of these little children might have been *infants* at their mothers' breasts.

The passage then establishes these facts:—

1. Infants are *moral* beings, because they were the recipients of our Saviour's *spiritual* blessing; they are *capable* of regeneration.
2. The children brought to him were regenerated by him at the time, for his *blessing* on the *soul* necessarily includes Regeneration.
3. He communicated his blessing, and therefore his grace, to

their souls, *independent of his word*, for they could not understand his truth, and therefore his grace may be *so communicated at the present time*; a fact which overturns the untenable position, that the truth is the main, if not the sole, medium of our sanctification.¹

4. Since our Saviour when on earth regenerated infants, he can and will regenerate them *now*, inasmuch as he “ever liveth,” in his *institutions*, as well as in heaven, and has said, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” etc., and “Whatever ye ask in my name, ye shall receive.”

5. As our Lord admits ALL children, *without exception*, to his favor, there is with him no secret decree, non-electing and reprobating a portion of infants: for he has not two wills; the one receiving, and the other rejecting the same souls.

I observe that the Catechism (Answer 166) “the doctrine of which on Baptism you receive,” refers to Luke 18:16, which is parallel to Mark 10:13-16, to prove that this sacrament is to be administered to infants. In the Presbyterian Confession of Faith (c. 28), Mark 10:14-16 is adduced in proof of the *same point*.

3. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38.

This passage you thus explain, “Here remission of sins is promised, upon *repentance and faith*, as it is elsewhere in Scripture; and the faith is to be proved by an act of obedience, namely, by coming to Baptism; and those who exercise this repentance and faith, shall receive the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. It was a case of *adult* Baptism, upon repentance and faith; and of such only as ‘gladly received the word.’”

Upon this exposition of yours, I would remark: It is *not certain* that none were baptized on the day of Pentecost, but adults; the contrary is, to say the least, highly probable. Saith St. Peter, “Be baptized every one of you, etc.; for the promise is to you and *your children*;” the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The promise is the reason the Apostle assigns why parents should be baptized; but the promise is as much to their children as to themselves: consequently there is the same reason why children are to be baptized as there is why adults are to receive Baptism; St. Peter himself being the judge. If you say with the

¹ “Among the manifold exercises of God’s people, dear Christians, there is **NONE MORE NECESSARY** for all estates, and at all times, than is *public Prayer*, and the *due use of Sacraments*. For in the first we beg at God’s hands all such things, as otherwise we cannot obtain; and in the other he *embraceth us*, and *offereth himself to be embraced of us*.” — *Homily on Common Prayer and Sacraments*.

Baptists, children here means posterity, I reply : The word children employed in this *unlimited sense*, necessarily includes infants ; and thus the passage furnishes what the opponents of Infant Baptism are so incessantly demanding : *Scriptural authority for baptizing little children.*

St. Peter here, as John Baptist had done previously, connects Baptism with remission of sins, and not only so, but also connects with Baptism the reception of the Holy Ghost. St. Peter does not tell his hearers to "prove their faith by an act of obedience, namely, by coming to Baptism;" all this is an addition of yours ; and an addition, moreover, which seems to me to bring with it a false doctrine ; that obedience is essential to the remission of sins ; that we are justified not by faith only, but by faith and works conjointly. Why not understand the Apostle's words according to their obvious and necessary meaning ? He says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." Nothing surely can be plainer and more positive. You appear almost to admit the truth when you say, "Those who exercise this repentance and faith shall receive the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit." Why reject from your paraphrase the clauses concerning Baptism and remission of sins ? Have we any right to suppress any portion of revealed truth ? Are we the judges to determine what truth is fundamental and what not — what truth is essential to the Gospel system, and what may be cast away ? We are *not* the judges, and we have *no* right to discard or conceal *any* portion, however small, of revealed truth. Why not then say, as the plain language of St. Peter requires you to say, "Those who exercise this repentance and faith" (and are with these qualifications baptized) "shall receive" (remission of sins and the regenerating and) "sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit ?" It is undeniable that the Church universal in Justin Martyr's time so understood the words of St. Peter ; how can we be right if we understand them otherwise ? since both the grammatical signification and the received interpretation of the early Church fix the meaning for which I am contending.

4. "And now why tarriest thou ? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16.

Upon this exhortation of Ananias, you thus comment : "The case was that of Saul, already converted to the faith of Christ, and called upon to consecrate himself to his service by an open profession of faith, and an act of obedience to his command ; thereby entering into covenant with Christ, and thereupon receiving a full pardon of all past offences. There is no intimation, in the whole

transaction, that Saul was not regenerated *till* he was baptized, and then *by* baptism; but the contrary is, to my apprehension, most evident."

When you speak of Baptism as "an act of obedience whereby Saul entered into covenant with Christ, and thereupon received a full pardon of all past offences," the language sounds to my ear too much like a covenant of works, and as though obedience was in part the instrument of our justification. I often hear others use the same language respecting Baptism, speaking of it as an act of obedience, or as a token of obedience; but such expressions do not appear to me to be warranted by the Scriptures, and moreover they savour of false doctrine.

When, however, you say that Saul when baptized "received a full pardon of all past offences," you admit all that I wish, so far as remission of sins is connected with Baptism, though he was not, although previously the recipient of Divine grace, regenerated in the Scriptural sense, till he was baptized; inasmuch as he was not born of water, at least; our Saviour having himself connected water with the new birth (John 3:5), and St. Paul calling Water-Baptism, "the laver of regeneration" (Tit. 3:5), and therefore we are not to disregard this connection, and to use the term Regeneration but in strict accordance with the signification the Word of God assigns to it. I referred, however, to Acts 22:16, not to prove that regeneration accompanies Baptism, but that forgiveness accompanies the administration of this sacrament; and as you allow this connection, I am happy to find our interpretations of this passage so far coincident.

5. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephesians 5:26.

These words I adduce to prove that Baptism has a sanctifying and cleansing effect. This, however, is the explanation you give of the passage. "It speaks only of cleansing the Church '*by the word*,' and plainly alludes to the washing of water as the *symbol* of cleansing."

The Greek word λουτρὸν, here translated "washing" occurs but in one other place in the New Testament (Titus 3:5), and is the same word the Septuagint uses in The Song of Solomon 4:2, "A flock which came up from the *washing*," and 6:6, "A flock of sheep which go up from the *washing*;" where the word plainly means *washing-place*. The signification of the word in Eph. 5:26, and Titus 3:5, is thus beyond all question *determined*; and therefore by "*washing*" in these two places, we are to understand, not the *act*, but the *place* of washing: a pool, bath, or laver. Dr. Edward

Robinson in his Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament says, that both in Eph. 5: 26 and Titus 3: 5, Baptism is spoken of; and he may well thus judge, since, as the latter passage refers to Baptism, the former as embracing precisely the same word ("washing" or laver), and also the term "water," must refer to Baptism also. Eph. 5: 26 may therefore be thus translated, "Christ sanctifies and cleanses the Church by the laver of water (Baptism) by the word." The Apostle most evidently here describes *two* instrumentalities employed by our Saviour in sanctifying and cleansing his Church : the one, Water-Baptism ; the other, the word, whatever this may be. Both are *literal, actual* instruments, the one just as much as the other. Neither are *symbolical*; for with the same propriety may we maintain that "the word" is a symbol, as that the washing of water is a symbol. If the New Testament is but a book of symbols, what cannot be made of it ! It can teach anything, and everything, and nothing definitely and positively ; and would therefore cease to be of any authority, or of any use, except as a toy for mystical critics to play with.

Yours, most truly and affectionately.

LETTER IX.

THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

— — — Rectory, February 22, 185—.

MY DEAR SIR :—

Bear with me while I finish the citation of passages of Holy Scripture which teach the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

6. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he *saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" Titus 3: 5.

With regard to these words you thus observe : "We are saved by *regeneration*, as if it were a washing, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. There is no allusion here to Baptism. The *washing* of regeneration is merely a figure of speech ; just as we say, the *besom* of destruction."

As you assert, that "there is no allusion made here to Baptism," I must first of all ascertain whether your assertion can be substantiated. Many other persons have supposed that St. Paul does in this place allude to Water-Baptism, and as the judgments of learned

and wise men are not to be despised unless for weighty reasons, I will mention a few of the authorities within my reach in favor of such an allusion.

1. Prof. Robinson, referred to in my last letter.
2. Prof. Hodge of Princeton in his Way of Life, published by the American Sunday School Union, and therefore approved by this Society ; says, p. 226, "Baptism is called the washing of regeneration."
3. The Westminster Catechism, "the doctrine of which on Baptism you receive," quotes Titus 3 : 5, to prove that "Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration by God's Spirit." (Answer 165.)
4. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith (c. 28. § 7) adduces Titus 3 : 5 as proof that "the sacrament of Baptism is but once to be administered to any person."
5. The Confession of Helvetia (Hall's Harmony, p. 303) says, "Baptism is the font of regeneration."
6. The Confession of Bohemia (Hall, p. 304) refers to Titus 3 : 5, to show that "God by Baptism doth wash away sin."
7. The Confession of Saxony (Hall, p. 310) employs this language : "That the Holy Ghost is given in Baptism, Paul affirmeth it in his epistle to Titus, saying, 'By the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.'"
8. The Confession of Suevland (Hall, p. 315) says, "Baptism is the font of regeneration. Titus 3 : 5."
9. Calvin (Institutes b. 4, chaps. 15, 16) in *three* different places affirms that Titus 3 : 5 refers to Baptism.
10. Archbishop Cranmer, in the passage I quoted in my first letter, thus writes : "Paul calleth the water of Baptism the bath of regeneration."
11. The Homilies (Sermon for repairing and keeping clean of Churches) have this language : "In the house of God, the Font to christen in, the fountain of our regeneration is presented unto us."
12. The Protestant Episcopal Church in her Baptismal Offices, in her Confirmation Service, and in her Articles, IX and XXVII, undoubtedly considers Titus 3 : 5 as referring to Baptism.
13. Augustine, the "Doctor of great authority," beyond all question connects Titus 3 : 5 with Baptism when he says, "The hereditary disease in children is healed by his grace who makes them well by the laver of regeneration."
14. Gregory Nazianzen of the fourth century has, in Oration 40, concerning Baptism, these words, "We call it the laver of regeneration ;" λοντρὸν παλιγγενεσίας, the very phrase of St. Paul in Titus 3 : 5.
15. Cyprian, A. D. 250, has these words, "That that is Bap-

tism in which the old man dies, and the new man is born, the blessed Apostle shows and proves, when he says, ‘he has saved us by the washing of regeneration;’” servavit nos per lavacrum (washing-place) regenerationis.¹

16. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 170, testifies to the same effect, “Men receive remission of sins by the laver of regeneration.”²

17. Justin Martyr, A. D. 150, speaking of candidates for Baptism, says, “They are brought by us to a place where there is water, and are regenerated by the same manner of regeneration by which we ourselves were regenerated; for they are washed with water in the name of God the Father,” etc.; Justin using the very word λουτρὸν, lavacrum, St. Paul uses in Tit. 3:5 and Eph. 5:26.³

What is the amount of these *seventeen* instances of assertion that Tit. 3:5 alludes to Baptism? Just this: The Presbyterian Church both in the United States and Great Britain, the Churches of Helvetia, Bohemia, Saxony, Suevland, Switzerland, the Protestant Episcopal Church, wherever found, the Church of ancient Africa, of Antioch, of Constantinople, and of Rome, *all maintain, that by the washing of regeneration in Tit. 3:5, Water-Baptism is intended.* The testimony of the ancient Churches to this effect is most valuable and conclusive, inasmuch as *the universally received interpretation of the passage at this early period must be the correct interpretation.* Whence came this interpretation? As the whole Primitive Church had it, from what source could it have descended but from the Apostles themselves, and therefore from an inspired and infallible original?

Having thus seen what has been the decision of the whole Christian world, till within a very recent period, I will consider the words of the passage itself.

We have already perceived that by “washing,” a *washing-place* is intended; the word *never* has any other meaning. Washing-place, pool, bath, laver must of necessity describe something which is material, literal, actual; nothing immaterial, nothing spiritual. Not only does the word itself prove this, but also its connection with the *renewing* of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul affirms that God our Saviour saves us by *two* agencies; the washing or laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Is not the renewing real and actual? If so, then must “the washing” be something actual and real likewise.

¹ Cypriani, Ep. 74, *ad Pompeium.*

² Theophil. *ad Autolyc.* I. ii. c. 16.

³ Justin, *Apol.* c. 61.

But what material washing was there of which *all* Christians were partakers? what *washing-place*, in which they all washed? for the language of the Apostle is here of universal application. No other real washing of which all believers in Christ partook save that of Water-Baptism in the names of the blessed Trinity. Nothing else then than Baptism can be intended by the washing, the washing-place, the laver of regeneration.—The nature of the word itself, its connection with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the obligation under which all the followers of the Lord are to be baptized, limit the application of the term to the Sacrament of our new birth.

But you say, “We are saved by regeneration as if it were a washing.” If so, then we are saved by the *Holy Ghost* as if it were a renewing. That is, our salvation by the *Holy Ghost* is only an apparent, not an actual renewing. We can apply this mode of explaining the clause, to other cases. “John did preach the baptism of repentance;” did preach *repentance* as if it were a baptism. Again, “Christ sanctifies and cleanses his Church with the washing of water;” he sanctifies and cleanses it with *water*, as if it were a washing; an explanation which will render Water-Baptism the means of the Church’s sanctification and cleansing, a truth you seem disposed to deny.

Once more you say, “‘The washing of regeneration’ is merely a figure of speech, just as we say, ‘the besom of destruction.’”

The prophet Isaiah does indeed (14: 23) employ the word besom figuratively, in the sense of sweeping, utter; but the term is here of necessity a metaphor, as it cannot in this passage be taken in its literal signification: and yet even besom of destruction is not necessarily a figure of speech, for there is such a literal instrument as a destructive besom, as the spiders would testify; the expression becomes figurative only from its application; in cases where it cannot be understood literally. Far otherwise is it with the phrase, *washing-place* of regeneration in the relation in which it stands; it can be taken in its literal sense, and therefore it must be, as a phrase is never figurative except when it cannot be apprehended according to the natural meaning of the words. In three (Song of Solomon 4: 2. 6: 6 and Eph. 5: 26) of the four places where alone in the whole Bible the word λουτρὸν, washing-place, bath, occurs, the term cannot by any ingenuity be wrested from its literal meaning, and therefore cannot in Tit. 3: 5, be thus perverted, except by an arbitrary violence which sets the laws of language at defiance, as well as disregards the judgment of the Church universal. We are not to find figures in language when we can avoid them; for if our fancy is to be the mould where figures

of speech are to be cast, the Bible is at once rendered the most enigmatical, perplexing, and uncertain of all books.¹

With the testimony and judgment of the entire Christian world till within a very short period, and with the laws of language all in my favor, I must therefore abide by the conclusion that by the laver of regeneration St. Paul designates Baptism by the element of water, accompanied by the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost.

7. "The like figure whereunto even *Baptism doth also now save us*, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 3:21.

On these words you remark, "Baptism is expressly called a *figure*. 'It is,' says Archbishop Sumner, on this passage, 'a *figure* of the cleansing of the heart from sin ;' and he well observes, that had the heart of Saul been like the heart of Simon Magus, when he was baptized a few months before, 'Baptism would have washed away no sin.'

Archbishop Sumner then believes, that in the case of Saul, "Baptism did wash away sin," but with Simon Magus it did not. To these observations, I have certainly no objection to urge.—When the Archbishop says that "Baptism is a *figure* of the cleansing of the heart from sin," I understand him to say that Baptism is a *sign* of spiritual cleansing, and not a *mere* figure, devoid of all efficacy. If Baptism be all figure, to be understood figuratively, then likewise is Noah's ark to be taken figuratively; for St. Peter says that Baptism is a figure "*like*" the ark; thus making two figures; the ark as much a figure as is Baptism; so that if the ark's being a figure does not destroy its reality, neither does Baptism's being a figure destroy its reality. If the Apostle does not describe Baptism as a literal transaction, then he does not describe the ark as an actual vessel. But he does describe both as realities, calling them figures for this reason: the ark was the type, and therefore a figure in this sense, while Baptism was the antitype (*ἀντίτυπος*), and therefore a figure in this sense; the ark figured Baptism; Baptism was figured by the ark, as our Baptismal Office so justly expresses it; so that after all the *figuring*, not a particle of reality is detracted from either; and the affirmation of St. Peter remains untouched: External Baptism by water doth now save, where there is the answer of a good conscience toward God;

¹ "There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, maketh of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing." — Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* B. V. c. 59, § 2.

where the answers to the interrogatories in Baptism can be made unto God conscientiously and sincerely, and where also there is faith in the resurrection of his only Son from the dead.

I have thus reviewed all the texts to which I referred you ; and now in looking back I cannot but think that they establish the positions for which I adduced them : *That the Word of God connects remission of sins and the regeneration and salvation of the soul with the sacrament of Baptism.*

The Church of England and her daughter in this country are not, then, in error, when they teach the unpopular and despised doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, SINCE IT WAS THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL TILL WITHIN A HUNDRED OR TWO YEARS, IS SET FORTH IN ALL THE PROTESTANT CONFESSIONS OF FAITH, as you can see in Hall's Harmony, AND IS THE DOCTRINE INculcated by the HOLY GHOST HIMSELF.

I am well aware how Socinus *glosses* some of these passages,¹ and also Dr. Thomas Scott;² but paraphrases and explanations are not the *veritable words* of the Holy Ghost, the *literal sense* of which, when it *can* be taken, and when it is sustained by the testimony of the Primitive Church, I am constrained to follow. Glosses and changes are the strong devices of the Socinians, Belsham warning his readers not to understand the Bible in its natural signification.³ If we can pervert and explain away one passage, we

¹ "Acts 2: 38. The remission of sins is here attributed either to repentance without consideration of Baptism, or else to the public profession of faith made in Baptism ; or if anything must be attributed to Baptism itself, it must be nothing but a declaration of such remission." — *F. Socinus on Baptism*, c. 7.

² "Acts 22: 16. Why should Saul hesitate to profess his faith by receiving Baptism, *the emblem of the washing away of sins.*" — *Dr. Thomas Scott.*

"Eph. 5: 26. Christ had given up himself to the death upon the cross, that he might cleanse his people from their pollution, *by those influences of the Holy Spirit of which the baptismal water was the external sign.*" — *Id.*

"Titus 3: 5. 'The washing of regeneration,' that new birth of the Spirit, *of which the laver of Baptism was the sacramental sign, but nothing more.*" — *Id.*

"1 Peter 3: 21. *Christ and his church are the true ark, into which men enter by true faith;* this faith Jews and Gentiles professed, when by baptism they entered the Christian Church ; *and thus the baptismal water formed as it were the sign of their safety.*" — *Id.*

The reader cannot but observe, that while with Faustus Socinus, Baptism is nothing but a ceremony, even with Dr. Scott, it is but a bare "emblem," or "sign," and not, as our Catechism declares, "a means whereby we receive an inward and spiritual grace, a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."

³ "Impartial and sincere inquirers after truth must be particularly on

may another, till the glorious Word of God is by the negative process reduced to insipid Deism. Neither Socinus, nor Dr. Scott, can be my teacher, since they contradict not only the testimony of the early Church, but the obvious and necessary sense of the Scriptures themselves.

But you say, "These texts are much too slight a foundation for so important a superstructure." These are by no means all the passages I might have cited, but I referred to no more, because I wished to employ no superfluous material in this discussion. But suppose these were all the texts in the Bible which treat of Baptism. Would they not be a foundation sufficiently substantial for the superstructure I have reared upon them? How many texts are necessary to prove a doctrine? I suppose *one single* declaration from God, the Fountain of infallible truth, is quite enough. The fewness of the texts; this is the very objection the Socinian presents against the Deity of the Son of God! How many texts speak of the Sabbath as a day of sacred rest? especially in the *New Testament*? But I need not, as I might, multiply questions in reference to other subjects; for *as proof does not depend upon the number of witnesses, so the truth of a doctrine does not depend upon the number of texts which announce it.*

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER X.

COMMON OBJECTION TO THE DOCTRINE.

— — — *Rectory, February 23, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR:—

Next in order in your letter is an objection which you urge against Baptismal Regeneration. You say, "A very large majority of baptized infants begin to sin, outwardly and actually, as soon as they begin to act; exhibiting no evidence at all of regeneration; I conclude, therefore, that these did not receive any spiritual change in Baptism. I deny that any such change is ordinarily imparted in that ordinance."¹

their guard against what is called the *natural signification* of words and phrases." — *Calm Inquiry*, by Thomas Belsham, pp. 4, 5.

¹ "Whether God does always accompany the sign with the thing

For myself, I see not why this same objection might not be urged against all Divine influence whatever upon our hearts; urged to the exultation of infidels, and to the painful distress of the conscientious disciples of Christ, who so often doubt of their gracious state, on account of the many corruptions they discover in their souls. It might be said: A very large majority of communicants, even among Protestants (taking the Protestant world as a whole), sin outwardly and actually, exhibiting no evidence of regeneration; and therefore we are to conclude that these never received any change. Will you assert this of a very large majority of communicants among our different Protestant brethren? It appears to me that you must maintain this assertion concerning them, in order to consistently maintain it with regard to baptized infants.

But the assertion in both cases rests upon two untenable positions: *The one, that Divine grace in the soul is indefectible; the other, that the manifestation of this grace in the dispositions and conduct is not affected by human neglect and wickedness.*

The assertion that baptized children, who exhibit no evidence of regeneration, never received any spiritual change, rests upon the position that *Divine grace in the soul is indefectible*. But this position is contrary to our Standards, and to the Word of God. Our Article XVI. says: "After we have received the Holy Ghost" (observe, from the Title of this Article, "Of sin after Baptism," the article connects the reception of the Holy Ghost with Baptism), "we may depart from the grace given and fall into sin;" in the Litany we pray God to "raise up those who fall;" and in the Burial Service utter this petition, "O merciful Saviour, suffer us not in our last hour to fall from thee;" while St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (6: 4-6) describes as *falling away* (for so is the original, the "If they shall," being added by the translators), certain persons, who had been enlightened and made partakers of the Holy Ghost; upon which passage, we have, in the First Part of the Homily of Repentance, the following authoritative comment: "In this place the holy Apostle speaks of the FINAL *falling away from Christ and his Gospel*, which is a sin against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, because that they do UTTERLY forsake the known truth, do hate Christ and his word, do crucify and mock him (but to their UTTER destruction), and therefore fall into desperation, and cannot repent. And that this is the true meaning of the Holy Spirit of God, it appeareth by many other places of the

Scriptures." The indefectibility of Divine grace is not then the doctrine, either of our Standards, or of the Holy Scriptures, and therefore the non-appearance of gracious affections in baptized children can never prove, that they were not regenerated in their Baptism. They may have then received the heavenly gift, and yet afterwards, through their own neglect and sinfulness, or through the carelessness and ungodliness of their parents, lost the precious treasure.

The assertion that baptized children, exhibiting no evidence of regeneration, never received any spiritual change, rests upon another untenable position : *The manifestation of Divine grace in the dispositions and conduct is not affected by human neglect and wickedness.* The objector to Baptismal Regeneration argues as though human agency were entirely unnecessary for the retention and increase of grace in the soul ; overlooking, on the one hand, how effectually parental irreligion and the unreproved and unrestrained sins of childhood may quench the celestial spark ; and on the other, the positive promises of God to all such as seek him early, as well as to all parents, who in faith and prayer instruct their children in his sacred truth, often reminding them of their Baptismal obligations, and bringing them up in his nurture and admonition. When we consider how few Christians, and how few ministers of the Gospel, even, adequately appreciate either the nature, the benefits, or the obligations of Baptism, as these are portrayed in the inspired volume, we may cease to wonder at the unproductiveness of this holy Sacrament as a means of grace ; while under these circumstances to deny the fact of Baptismal Regeneration, on account of its want of greater fruit, is just as relevant, as to deny that a field has been sown, which in early summer shows only here and there a rising sprout and a sickly head, because after seed-time the ground was not fenced and guarded, but trodden down by the cattle, and plundered by domestic fowls and birds of the air.

Remove, then, the two positions on which rests the assertion, Baptized children, exhibiting no evidence of regeneration, never received any spiritual change, and the assertion falls to the ground ; and with it the objection to the reality of Baptismal Regeneration, because we cannot subsequently discover in the baptized child any indications of a renewed nature. Grace may be lost ; and therefore, though not now possessed, it may have been conferred in Baptism : its retention and growth God has made dependent upon human faithfulness, and accordingly, grace actually bestowed may perish from the want of protection and culture.

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER XI.

ALLEGED EVILS OF THE DOCTRINE.

— Rectory, February 25, 185—.

MY DEAR SIR :—

It is my wish to notice in this communication what you allege concerning the dangerous tendencies and pernicious effects of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

On these points you thus express yourself: “The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration I think radically erroneous, leading to spiritual apathy and loss of the soul. My conscience is disturbed at the thought of countenancing such errors, and starving my own soul. The teaching of Rome is externalism, or a system of perfunctory observances. To this error very many of the Episcopal Church are fast verging, and the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is one of the first steps.”

As the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is the doctrine of the Bible, (“God saves us by the washing” [the Baptism] “of regeneration,”) as I have already proved, the doctrine cannot be an error, either partial or radical, but is an inspired and immutable truth. As such it can become the occasion of delusion, defective teaching, apathy, spiritual starvation, and loss of the soul, only by being united with human admixtures, or by being perverted and abused. If the doctrine be commingled with dross, or become the victim of perversion and abuse, *the doctrine itself is not in fault, but the individuals or the Churches are to be blamed that either obscure the truth, or change it into a lie.* The doctrine would receive a very delusive and pernicious addition, were it associated with either of the false dogmas of human invention, that Divine grace cannot be obliterated from the soul, or that its perpetuity and development do not depend upon the fidelity and diligence of its recipients; for in this case the baptized, both adults and children, would conclude that their salvation was inevitably secure, and would, of course, under the influence of such delusion, sink into spiritual apathy, and not only starve, but lose their souls.

But has the Protestant Episcopal Church made any such false and dangerous additions to the truth, that we are regenerated in Baptism? We must appeal directly to her Standards, now before the world for three centuries, and from these standards seek a decision; since by these are her principles and tendencies to be

determined, and not by the views of her members, whether ministers or people. What though not merely "very many," but all in her communion were not only "verging," but actually verged and gone to Rome, this universal defection would not change the character of our Church, as this is embodied in her Liturgy, Offices, and Articles, for she would still (fairest work of God below the skies), there remain, a radiant and glorious monument of Scriptural and Primitive truth, and a fearless and unaltered monitor to rebuke her unfaithful and disobedient children for their apostasy and danger.

Does then our noble mother teach us, that Baptismal grace is all the grace we need, and that Baptism will save us, believe and do what we may? Turn to her Baptismal and Confirmation Offices, and to her Catechism, and what do we perceive? We see that while according to the Church, Infant Baptism is the *seminal* act, it is by no means the only act the baptized child is to perform, or that is to be performed on his behalf, in order for him to reach the kingdom of glory. Is the grace of Baptism all the grace he requires? Why then is he so solemnly assured as he is, so soon as his mind is sufficiently opened to understand the subject, "My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, and to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, *without his special grace*, which thou must learn *at all times* to call for by *diligent prayer*." But you say, "the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration leads to spiritual apathy." A soul in apathy, whilst it is *praying diligently and calling at all times for the special grace of God!* Impossible.

No person, moreover, can sink into a state of spiritual apathy, so long as he has a sense of his Baptismal obligations, and is grateful to Christ for the benefits he received when he was baptized. But this feeling of obligation and this gratitude to the Lord are the very motives which the Church employs with every child who has been washed in the laver of regeneration. "In Baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. My sponsors did then promise and vow three things in my name: first, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life. Dost thou not *think* that thou art *bound* to believe and to do as they have promised for thee? Yes, verily, and by God's help, *so I will*: and *I heartily thank* our heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Here

then we have an acknowledged, and moreover a professed *vow* of faith and obedience, and likewise a *thankful* heart for the blessings of salvation, and this vow and this gratitude both growing out of the fact that Baptism is the seminal act of our living unto God.

You are likewise found to say, that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration “starves the soul.” We have just seen what vows Baptism imposes upon us, and what gratitude to Christ it inspires, as well as what incessant prayers it requires us to offer, and therefore in these vows and gratitude and prayers, the soul of the baptized is supplied with no small amount of nourishing aliment. But in order to save us from spiritual starvation, the Church furnishes still larger provision: provision both for our intellects and our affections.

Every baptized child is required to “learn all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul’s health; he is to lead a godly and a Christian life; he is to follow the example of Christ; he is to die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; he is continually to mortify all his evil and corrupt affections, and daily to proceed in all virtue and godliness of living.”

But I have by no means given even an imperfect outline of the entire Baptismal system of our Church; for Baptism, with all its instruction, discipline, and motives, is but introductory and preparatory to the other Sacrament of the Gospel, that of the body and blood of our Lord.

What qualifications does the Church demand of every one who presents himself at the holy table? “True repentance of former sins; a steadfast purpose to lead a new life; a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ; a thankful remembrance of his death; and charity with all men;” and all these qualifications are to be made subjects of habitual self-examination. What does the Church assure the qualified communicant he will obtain in the sacred Supper? “Remission of sins, and all other benefits of our Lord’s passion; the spiritual food of his most precious body and blood,” and also spiritual union and fellowship with him. What incitements have we here for quickened earnestness and zeal in the salvation of our souls! and what ample provision for our growth in grace, and for our conformity to the image and perfection of our immaculate and Divine Saviour! If any soul starve in the midst of such plenty, the fault must be, not in the heavenly food, but in the depraved appetite and the diseased digestion.

No! my dear sir, a wiser and safer, a more Scriptural, spiritual, and edifying model of Christian character and training, and more influential motives to Christian activity and fervor, and larger provisions for the health and nourishment of our souls cannot be found

nor devised, than in the Baptismal system of our truly Evangelical and Apostolic Church; for the system embraces the doctrinal wisdom and practical piety of the entire sacred volume, and the result of the combined teaching and experience of the Church of Christ in the days of her earliest and purest existence. If used, as parents and baptized children are required to use the doctrine, Baptismal Regeneration cannot conduct to formalism and apathy, to moral leanness and death; but, through the blessing of the Almighty Author of this truth, to the happy opposites of all these: spirituality and renewed devotion, vigorous progress in knowledge and grace, and the perfection of the Divine life in the soul.

There remain one or two other points in your letter to be noticed, and to these I will give the earliest attention.

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

LETTER XII.

ALLEGED EVILS OF THE DOCTRINE.

— — — *Rectory, February 27, 185—.*

MY DEAR SIR:—

In replying to your statements concerning the dangerous tendencies and pernicious effects of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, I omitted, for want of space, one other remark of yours on this point. “Hence it is, that we hear so little of the natural corruption of our hearts, and of earnest calls to seek *conversion* by the Holy Spirit; but are so generally addressed as pretty good sort of Christians, though not quite as good as we should be. It is against this delusion that I earnestly protest.”

When you penned this earnest protest, you could hardly have had in your recollection the language of our Article IX, where we are taught that “man is, by the fault and corruption of his nature, very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and *this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated or baptized;*” or the often-repeated acknowledgment in our General Confession, “There is no health in us.” It appears then that our Church, in making Baptismal Regeneration the basis of her doctrinal teaching, does not throw into the shade

"the natural corruption of our hearts," but is perpetually declaring and confessing this important and undeniable truth ; and her fidelity in this respect to the pure Gospel, and this in the midst of abounding and increasing Pelagianism, is that which ought to endear the Church to you more and more, and lead you to devote all your energies and influence to her defence and extension.

You observe, moreover, that in consequence of the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration "we hear so little of calls to seek *conversion* by the Holy Spirit." To this charge of deficiency, I know not but the Prayer Book will be obliged to plead guilty, provided we understand the accusation in the literal sense, for there are but few places out of the Bible where our Church employs the word conversion. The reason of this is doubtless the infrequency with which the term is employed in the New Testament, and then not as exclusively signifying the *first* step or act in the divine life. Conversion, in the Scriptural sense, is a turning from sin to holiness, so that according to the Word of God, an individual is converted whenever he forsakes his evil ways, and turns unto the Lord, whether for the first time or subsequently. With this idea of conversion the Prayer Book abounds, although it does not often make use of the precise term ; and accordingly we shall "hear" from the Church not merely a "little," but a great deal, on the subject of conversion, in its true and Scriptural meaning. It seems quite needless to occupy time in proving a fact which will so frequently meet the eyes of any one who takes the trouble to turn over the pages of our Liturgy and Offices. Asks the Catechism, "What is required of persons to be baptized ? *Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith,* whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament." What subjects are thus furnished the preacher, wherewith to address the impenitent and unbelieving ! and if he neglect to use them, the blame rests upon *him*, and not upon his *Church*. After Baptism, Confirmation, and admission to the Holy Communion, the theme which is constantly pressed upon our minds and hearts is that of repentance and faith. This theme pervades all our services, from the Daily Prayers to the highest act of devotion in which we are allowed to engage. What is the General Confession but an act of repentance and turning unto the Lord ; and for what do we pray in the Absolution but repentance and God's Holy Spirit ? while in the Lord's Supper these same acts and prayers are repeated in a more impressive form ; not to overlook the earnest exhortations which we so often hear in connection with the Holy Supper to abandon every sin, and to devote ourselves wholly unto the Lord, which act of self-consecration we moreover, in

express words perform whenever we draw near the table of our crucified Redeemer.

I cannot therefore see how your charge against the Baptismal system of our Church can be justified. This system may indeed be perverted and abused by faithless and time-serving ministers, and by worldly and superficial people ; but what good thing cannot be diverted from its legitimate purpose ? and if the abuse of an excellence is argument against it, our Christian Sabbath will suffer sadly, and even our heaven-born faith must needs be abandoned, because not itself exempt from the lot of every blessing under the sun, corruption and perversion. No ; let us be thankful to God for the Scriptural and edifying standards and guides he has given us in our Book of Common Prayer, and also in reference to its unparalleled merits, obey the injunction of the Apostle, “ HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

Having to such an extent trespassed upon your time and patience, I will for the present suspend this correspondence by a single remark, which seems to be fully justified by the historical facts we have been examining.

From the loud and startling notes of alarm and warning, which have now for so long a time sounded throughout the ranks of the opposers of Protestant Catholicity, and from the pious horror with which its adherents are so generally regarded, we might conclude, that he, whose name is “ Liar ” (John 8 : 44), had brought its principles from the bottomless pit, had with his angels assumed the forms of Archbishops and Bishops, of Presbyters and Deacons, and constituted the Church of England and her daughter in these United States for the express purpose of multiplying and scattering through the world the poisonous plants, and therewith blighting and destroying whatever is truly evangelical and holy. Surely, it must be some pressing danger that thus stirs so many tongues, moves so many pens, provides themes for so many pulpits, imparts activity to so many teeming presses, leads to the organization of so many associations for stopping the spread of the so-called awful and blasphemous doctrine,—that Divine grace is communicated in the Sacraments,—and furnishes employment for so many busy agents and toilsome solicitors and distributors. What is the mighty occasion of all this agitation and clamor ? of all this zeal and labor ? Simply, as we see from Primitive and Divine testimony, — *testimony which cannot be set aside*, — that the Anglican Church and her American descendant, hold and promulgate the Faith taught in Holy Scripture, and held and promulgated by the early Church at the time when the bones of the Apostles of our Lord had not yet mouldered in the dust, and when the very ministers

whom they themselves had ordained, had not yet gone down to their graves ! Were the first martyrs now on earth, *where* would they find the Gospel for which they bled ? and were our Saviour himself now to come from heaven, *in what Church* would he recognize in their integrity the doctrines which he delivered to his Twelve Chosen Witnesses and their associates ?

May He, who is the Light of the world, and who is able to subdue all things unto himself, mercifully open all blind eyes ! and graciously constrain all hearts to embrace and obey fully and exclusively his own unalterable and imperishable TRUTH !

Yours, very truly and affectionately.

ALMIGHTY and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and forever. AMEN.—*Supplication of the Bishop in Confirmation Office.*

TRACTS FOR PAROCHIAL USE,

No. 3.

Christian Ordinances.

BAPTISM;

CONFIRMATION;

COMMUNION.

BY

ALFRED B. BEACH, D. D.,

RECTOR OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, NEW-YORK.

New-York:

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY,
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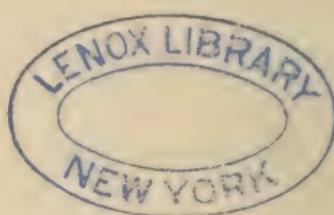
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Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and
affections of sinful men; Grant unto Thy people that they may
love the thing which Thou commandest, and desire that which Thou
doe~~t~~ promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of
the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys
are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Collect for Fourth Sunday after Easter.



BAPTISM.

Have you been baptized? As a Christian believer, I can hardly express what I feel to be the importance of this question. Let me assure you, in all sincerity and earnestness, that the answer to it is with every individual in this our Christian land, so far as any of us know concerning the future world, a most serious matter—it may be to you a matter of life or death. These are our Saviour's own words: (St. John, iii. 5:) “Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

I do therefore entreat the attention of all who take up these few pages to the following considerations. I shall endeavor to briefly explain:

I. *The nature and design of Baptism.*

II. *The qualifications requisite on the part of the person receiving it.*

III. *The benefit or privilege which is conveyed through it; and,*

IV. *The obligations which it imposes.*

I. *As to the nature and design of Baptism.*—It is an institution of Christ, appointed by him for the admission of men into his kingdom on earth. It is

called by Christians a *sacrament*; that is, something higher than a mere rite or ceremony, and distinguished from such not only as being ordained by our Lord Himself; but also by the essential fact that in it a material thing is employed and consecrated, according to a prescribed form of words, as an appropriate and expressive sign or symbol of that which is intended. Moreover, in a *sacrament*, certain acts pass between God and man, *closing* and *sealing*, as in baptism, or renewing and strengthening, as in the Lord's Supper—a mutual compact and agreement. Thus baptism is, first, an institution of Christ, appointed for the admission of men into His Church. Of this there can be no doubt in the mind of any candid reader of the New Testament. The direct command, (St. Matt. xxviii. 19,) "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and the constant practice upon this command of those to whom it was given, put this beyond all question. The outward and visible sign is water, consecrated by the form of words which our Lord himself gave, and appropriate as signifying what was intended, as we shall in a moment see by looking at the acts which pass between the person baptized and God. These are, on the part of God, a free offer of all the benefits and blessings of the new covenant made in Jesus Christ, particularly of remission of sins past, the aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life upon the conditions set forth; and, on the part of man, an acceptance of this offer and of these conditions, together with a vow and promise to fulfill them, by a constant devotion of the life to the service of the Holy Trinity.

A state of holiness, therefore, of purity, of cleanliness from the guilt and defilements of sin, or, as our

catechism says, “*a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness;*” this is the “*inward and spiritual grace*” intended and set forth in this sacrament, of which water is the appropriate symbol. We shall have occasion to speak more particularly of this when we come to consider the privilege which is conveyed through this sacrament. Let us pass on, then, to the next point, viz. :

II. The qualifications requisite on the part of the person coming to Holy Baptism.—In answer to the question, “what is required of persons to be baptized?” our catechism says, “*repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament.*” True repentance and a living faith—these are the requisite qualifications. Not a mere sorrow for sin, but such a perception and sense of its vileness in the sight of God, as causes the soul to hate it and abhor every practice of it; and not a mere general belief in the doctrines of the Gospel, but a full and cheerful confidence in the love of God, as manifested in the redeeming ministry and work of Christ.

But here the inquiry has arisen, *Why then are infants baptized*, who, by reason of their tender age, are incapable of exercising either faith or repentance? And because this inquiry affects a matter so exceedingly important, and has led to very opposite views and practices, it is proper that we should give it our serious consideration.

Let me, therefore, present for your careful reflection, some of the principal arguments upon this point which have been gathered from an examination of Holy Scripture alone, without entering at all upon that which is given by the testimony of the Church in her constant practice, although, if Scripture had

been silent here, this testimony would have been sufficient with every considerate mind.

First: As to repentance, the matter is easily disposed of by the fact that infants need no repentance. They are clear of personal guilt, and, as yet, have nothing to repent of.

Secondly: As to faith, which is the other requisite. Now, wherever we read in Scripture that faith is required on the part of those who are to be baptized, it certainly supposes that faith is possible. Any other supposition would be not only nonsensical, but lead to a conclusion positively shocking. For I would ask, is more required by our Lord in order to be *baptized*, than to be *saved*? Yet it is distinctly declared, "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." Then let us not refuse *baptism* to children because they have not faith, unless we are prepared to say that they cannot be *saved* for the same reason. Faith is not required in infants, simply because it is not possible for them to exercise faith.

So far, then, as repentance and faith are concerned, there is no bar, and there can be none against the baptism of children.

And let us see if there are not furnished by Holy Scripture positive reasons why we should give to infants the benefits of this holy sacrament.

They whose learning has qualified them to speak with authority upon this subject, tell us that the ceremony of baptism had been, for a long time before the coming of our Saviour, practiced among the Jews when any one was converted from heathenism to their religion; and accordingly, when John the Baptist performed the rite, none expressed surprise at it, or spoke of it as strange, but, on the contrary, multitudes conformed to it; and the only question

that was raised regarding it had reference to the authority upon which it was done, all viewing it as a well-known custom applied to a new dispensation. And in this admission of proselytes, we are expressly told that infants were baptized, the male children being circumcised first and then baptized. Now, this being the common practice among the Jews, when our Saviour gave to his Apostles the commission to go forth and baptize all nations, must we not infer that the same classes of persons were subjects for baptism that always had been; that is to say, *infants* as well as adults, unless, indeed, they were expressly forbidden? If this be so, then, instead of expecting to find an instance of infant baptism particularly noted in Scripture, it would be purely accidental if we should do so; and instead of its being proper or reasonable to require such an instance at our hands, it lies upon those who differ from us to show us an *express prohibition* of this practice.

Again: There is no doubt but that baptism, under the Christian, answers to circumcision under the Jewish dispensation, both being divinely appointed rites of admission into the Church of God.

Circumcision was not a mere mark of carnal descent, but was an institution of a religious nature; and it laid such as conformed to it under obligations similar to those imposed upon him who is baptized. Those obligations were of a kind as much above the power or capacity of infants to fulfill, as any in the Gospel covenant. Hence it follows that the same argument which should attempt to show that infants are unfit subjects for Christian baptism, on account of their incapacity to perform the duties or to enjoy the privileges of that ordinance, would also show that infants were not fit subjects for circumcision, and so would charge the Almighty with establishing an ordinance for the admission of infants into his

Church, imposing an impossible obligation. This is something we cannot abide. Knowing, as we do, that little children were, in the gracious judgment of our Father in Heaven, fit subjects for admission to a share in the benefits of the Mosaic covenant, we cannot but believe most firmly that they are, by the divine will, proper subjects for the greater mercies of the Christian. We cannot but ask ourselves, if they were subjects of the promise, is it reasonable to suppose that they are not subjects of the fulfillment of that promise. We cannot possibly believe that this blessed and glorious fulfillment gathers less within its arms than did the promise.

Upon this very important point another consideration has been advanced, the weight of which no Christian man can but realize. What would have been the feeling of the Jews towards Christianity if, while infants were admitted into the Jewish, they had been excluded from the Christian Church by the ministers of our Lord when they went forth to make disciples and baptize among all nations?

To have sprung from the seed of Abraham was considered by them the very highest privilege, because they conceive that this relationship offered to them all the blessings promised to that patriarch. That parent would have been thought unjust and cruel to his offspring who should have neglected to bring his child, at eight days old, to be made by the rite of circumcision a partaker of those promised blessings. And who does not know with what tenacity those Jews clung to the rites and ceremonies handed down to them from their forefathers? Who is ignorant of the trouble and vexation which they gave the Apostles and first Christians in this matter; how they were constantly accusing them of setting aside their sacred rites, and ready to destroy them for refusing to comply with any, the least ceremony,

which they esteemed sacred? And is it for one moment to be supposed, that in a matter so naturally and so justly dear to them as the admission of their little ones to a share in the covenanted blessings of God, they would calmly, and without a word of opposition, consent to a total and entire change? Can we believe that so many of them would have been converted, had it been true that their children were to be shut out from the Church of God, which a Jew would have regarded as the very greatest evil that could come upon him? Can we believe that they who were not converted to Christianity, with all their intense hatred against it, would have been silent, would never have opposed one word, not even so much as to mention the fact (if it was a fact) that infants were excluded from the Church under the Christian dispensation? With a ceaseless watchfulness and an unrelenting jealousy they seized hold upon everything that could possibly be brought against the religion of Christ; but never a word do we find accusing Him or His disciples of teaching that infants were not to be admitted to share in the promises and blessings of the Gospel covenant.

III. And now as to the privilege conveyed through this divine ordinance.—Viewing Holy Baptism as the institution appointed by Christ, and as a solemn act performed by man, by and in which man enters into covenant-relationship to God, it seems plain that the privilege bestowed in this sacrament is the making over to the person baptized a right and title to the promises and blessings of the Gospel dispensation, formally receiving him as a party to that agreement which God, of his own free mercy, has offered to man through his Son Jesus Christ, expressed by our catechism as being “*made members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the king-*

dom of heaven ;" for, as it says again, "being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby (*i. e.*, by being baptized) made the children of grace." Upon our birth into this world in a naturally sinful, condemned and hopeless condition, we are met by the mercy of God with the Gospel of pardon and reconciliation. We are assured that God has set forth a way by which all men may be saved; that He has agreed to grant, upon certain conditions, forgiveness, favor and eternal life; and to admit us into this compact, baptism, wherein we, on our part, formally, publicly and solemnly accept of His offer and dedicate our lives to His service—to admit us into this compact, baptism is His own appointed rite. And because it takes us from a state of sin and condemnation, wherein we had no covenanted right to expect the Divine forgiveness, and translates us into a new state—a state of grace, the Gospel state—in which are presented and offered to our acceptance remission of sins, the aids of the Holy Spirit, and all the blessings and benefits purchased by the blood of Christ, it is called by a most natural and expressive figure of speech the new birth—being born again—and they who enter into it are said to have become by baptism *regenerate*. Now, so far as this privilege is outward and relative, it is plain that all who are baptized are partakers of it; but so far as it is actually and really applied, it is equally plain that they only secure the benefit of it who possess in their integrity the required qualifications of faith and repentance. God may give His promises, but since those promises are conditional, they can avail nothing to one who does not believe those promises, or who will not fulfill those conditions. God may offer His Spirit, but this offer is vain to him whose hard and impenitent heart rejects His influences. And yet such persons are not to be

baptized again! They are admitted into Christ's visible kingdom, and its blessings are ready for them upon their conversion. But until then, they are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath ; for they will be judged not as heathen persons, but as persons who had signed the agreement, and to whom God was ready, in compliance with His truth, to grant His every promise and blessing ; and observe, that the actual bestowal of every privilege of the Christian covenant is dependent upon our fulfillment of the conditions upon which it is placed.

IV. The obligations imposed upon us by this covenant are of the most solemn nature, embracing all that Christ has given us to believe and commanded us to do, ceasing only with the termination of our probationary life. And it is only as we keep them constantly in our minds, and are ever striving to discharge them with more and more of solicitude, fidelity and prayer, that we can rest our hope upon the Divine promises. To forget them, to live in the neglect of them, to refuse to acknowledge them, is to make our baptism of none other effect but to increase our condemnation. High as is the privilege of being permitted to enter into covenant with God ; encouraging, ennobling and glorious as is the knowledge that He has adopted us as His children, and that He has prepared for us and given us a title to an inheritance of everlasting felicity, it is all worse than vain unless we walk as " dear children," and " purify ourselves even as He is pure." Often should you and I, my Christian brother, think of our baptism : with inexpressible gratitude, satisfaction and delight may we remember the fact. But let us, at the same time, be mindful that throughout this mortal life we are heirs in prospect and in hope only —heirs by a title not absolute but conditional. With

perfect confidence may we rely upon God's promises; but the obligation of His justice and truth to make good those promises stands at the end of an humble, holy and obedient walking before Him all the days of our life.

CONFIRMATION

I SHALL assume that you know the origin and purpose of this holy rite;—that is to say, that you acknowledge its apostolic authority and practice, and accept it as the solemn ordinance wherein baptized persons confess, renew and ratify their vows of obedience according to the terms and conditions of the Christian covenant, thus making sure their title to the promises;—and also that you regard it as a means of grace, being an appointment special to this end, and so solemnly administered by the highest order of Christ's ministers. We know that the divine favor is promised to every one who at any time, in penitence and faith, asked for it; and how can we but believe that it will be bestowed in bounteous measure on such an occasion as this?

Confirmation, then, is to you the *precious opportunity* for that profession of your Christian faith, and that formal recognition of your obligation to fulfill your part of the Christian covenant which seals you as God's own child. If you were baptized in infancy, of course you were then incapable of any knowledge or understanding of what was done; but nevertheless you were therein admitted to a full participation in the agreement which redeeming

love has seen fit to make with fallen man for his pardon and salvation; and, most undoubtedly, if at any time during that period of your childhood, God had taken you out of this world, the blessed inheritance would have been yours. Not old enough to comprehend the nature of your obligations, you would not have been held responsible for their fulfillment.

But now the case is entirely different. You have arrived at the age of understanding and choice, and therefore of responsibility. You have learned the conditions and requirements of the Christian covenant. There can no longer be put in for you the plea of incapacity. You must now either recognise and acknowledge those conditions and requirements as binding upon your life, or set them aside as of no obligation.

Here are two completely separate and contrary lines of determination and action between which you must decide. Nobody can now act in your stead. Each one of you has to choose for himself. And behold the issue!—On the one side, God's promises of forgiveness, of grace, of everlasting life: on the other, broken vows, ruined hopes, a destroyed title.

If you decide to comply with the invitations of the Gospel and to live accordingly, you have, when you come to Confirmation, assured to you the divine blessing. If otherwise, refusing to acknowledge yourself bound by your part of the covenant, and so failing to fulfill its requirements, you cannot expect that its proffers of love will be made good to you, but you must see that if the Gospel is true, you will inevitably be cut off in the end, as having neither part nor lot in the inheritance.

Now, on which of these sides your decision should be cast—which of these two courses of action you

ought to take—I need not say. Speaking more especially to the young, I may assume that the world has not yet so hardened your hearts that they cannot feel, nor has a long notwithstanding the influence of divine grace produced in you that chilling indifference which so deadens religious sensibility. I am fain to believe that what you want most of all is encouragement—strength to *resolve*—power of determination to *decide* this matter *now*, in the way your conscience directs you to do: and it is in the earnest hope and prayer that what is here printed may be a *help* to you in this respect, that I am now addressing you. I think I know the chief obstacles that lie in your way, and which, when you feel that you ought to perform this duty, appear so great that you fall back in painful discouragement. I will speak of some of them, though it must be very briefly.

One, and a very common one, is the thought that you are *not good enough* for Confirmation. Now, if your heart is so fixed upon the world that you are unwilling to give up its sinful pleasures, and break loose from an inordinate attachment to its objects, it is true that you are unprepared for this solemn rite. Of course we would not have you promise to renounce what you have no intention of renouncing, or to do what you have no disposition or purpose to do. But if this feeling, as is usually the case, exists in a heart disposed and willing to do its duty, and arises merely from consciousness of sinfulness and weakness, then it is altogether wrong to make it an obstacle, and doing so comes from a mistaken view of the subject. Confirmation is not an evidence or seal of holiness attained, but of a *desire* for holiness, and a sincere determination to attain it. That which fits you for receiving this ordinance is not a life of former obedience, but a hearty wish and firm

resolution that hereafter the life shall be obedient and faithful to the vows under which it has been bound, and from the responsibilities of which it cannot escape.

Another obstacle not unfrequently mentioned by persons thoughtful of this duty, and otherwise willing to perform it, is an idea that there must first have transpired, as a necessary qualification, in the experience of the inner life, some marked change, wrought in some extraordinary manner by a supernatural agency, and producing the effect to turn the heart from the world to God, irrespectively of the will or the efforts of the individual.

Now, that the heart must be changed and turned from the world to God ;—that is to say, that the affections, hopes, desires, objects, and resolutions of the individual must be so changed as to renounce those things that are sinful, believe those things which God has propounded to our faith, and be willing to engage and to endeavor obediently to do those things which He has commanded, is so far from being denied, that it is the very thing acknowledged and professed in Confirmation. But, then, this change is to be expected, not as a sudden and miraculous or unaccountable effect, but as the result of reflection, and the free exercise of the will put forth in co-operation with the ever-present influence of the Holy Spirit. If, then, you feel yourself moved to do this duty ; if you feel willing to acknowledge yourself bound by the solemn vows which are upon you ; if you feel desirous of living a Christian life, and ready so to endeavor in all earnestness and sincerity, do not wait for any other change, and look for none but that which follows this as you go on from grace to grace, “ daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.”

Another obstacle in the way of the young, espe-

cially, with reference to this duty, is an impression that its performance will rob them of cheerfulness and of the enjoyments of life. Be assured that they who so misrepresent our Religion are themselves in great error concerning it, or else are its enemies and are trying to deceive you. It denies you no enjoyment that is innocent: it debars you from no pleasure that a rational and accountable being, living under an enlightened sense of his relations to God and his fellow man, can find delight in. It does indeed forbid the indulgence of your sinful lusts and passions, those powerful foes which "war against the soul;" it does warn you against a fondness for the excitements, amusements, and gratifications of this corrupting world: and it does call upon you to love and seek supremely those things which are above, and condemn you when you allow any thing on earth to lessen that love, or interrupt that following after holiness; but what is there, what can there be in the performance of duty, in the practice of virtue and purity, that can make a soul unhappy? What can there be in the assurance of God's love and favor, and in the certain hope of eternal life and salvation, that can make a soul morose and melancholy? Who can be so cheerful as he who carries in his bosom a quiet and approving conscience? Who can enjoy the good things of life so much as he whose heart overflows with love and gratitude to the great and gracious Giver, while he reflects upon His infinite goodness? Who has such a fountain of comfort and of gladness as he who can look forward to the possession of eternal enjoyments in that blessed abode where there is no more pain, nor sorrow, nor tears forever? O, it is not to take away from you, but to give you cheerfulness and joy—uninterrupted cheerfulness and unfading joys; to put you in possession of pure and real pleasures,

that we urge you to yield yourselves willingly and heartily to the holy influences and delightful duties of that precious religion, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are paths of peace."

But once more. You feel distrustful of your ability to live consistently with the Christian profession, and you shrink from entering into engagements which you feel that you have not strength to perform as faithfully as you think they ought to be performed.

Now, that every Christian is bound to strive to be perfect is unquestionably true. But before we go a single step further, let me ask whether you are not giving room in your mind to a very grave error? Are you not permitting yourself to be influenced by an idea that the obligations and responsibilities of one who makes no profession of the Christian faith are less than those of one who does? No mistake can be greater than this. In advance, therefore, of all consideration as to what may be the duties of a professing believer, settle it firmly in your mind that every person living under the light of the Gospel is bound to be a professing believer. He who fails in this respect, only adds to the measure of his responsibility, and casts into that measure at once a just cause for his condemnation.

But now, agreeing with all your ideas of what the life of a Christian should be, let me ask you to reflect, that, in consequence of our fallen condition, we can none of us in this life reach that perfection which our minds can conceive and our wills desire. We may learn this from what is written concerning the experience of the best and purest of men. What said St. Paul? "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching

forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." God has called you in Christ Jesus to obey His commands here, that you may receive His blessings hereafter:—and let me assure you that your utmost zeal and care will never place you at that point in this probationary existence where you can say, with truth, that you are perfect—where you will not see far in advance a height of holiness to which you are to "press" onward. With the single exception of the Son of God, never did the human being live who needed not every day of his mortal existence the forgiveness of Heaven. But can the fact that we cannot do every thing be a good reason for doing nothing? Is the truth that we cannot be perfectly holy, a valid excuse for not engaging and striving to be as holy as we can? You say that you are weak:—you fear that your resolutions and endeavors will fail. But can that excuse you from seeking those helps which God has provided and promised to give you, that your resolutions may be strengthened, and your wills made more determined, and your hearts and minds more able to cope with your spiritual enemies? Do you not depend upon God for the very air you breathe? How, then, can you imagine yourselves less dependent upon Him for the life and strength and activity of your souls, and why should you not seek His aid in every channel through which He may be pleased to convey it?

Let, then, all these apologies be laid aside as unworthy to be offered or entertained as against the performance of the solemn duty which we are now considering.

My dear young brethren, the Church at this hour needs your strength:—the sinful world needs your example:—your country needs your Christian in-

fluence to heal its dreadful wounds. Perilous times are on us, and we feel that more perilous times are coming. Infidelity, in every form of deceit, is casting its venom all through society, and poisoning the very fountains of our security and peace. Where shall be found a hope of preservation if the young, who are rising to rule the coming times, are not followers of Christ? Awake, we beseech you, to a sense of your responsibilities. Do not waver and hesitate in a matter which so vitally concerns you. Do not put off, to some uncertain future time, the performance of an obligation so important, and which the Divine Spirit is pressing upon you now. Remember those words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."

You cannot be neutral in this solemn question. *With* Christ, or *against* Him:—"gathering" with Him for the glories of His Redeeming Love,—for the filling up the number of His elect, who shall march with Him triumphant from Judgment to joy eternal, or "*scattering*," wasting life and all its noble energies and faculties, throwing them away to perish with perishing things.

One or the other of these you must choose. One, or the other of these you must be doing. How can you hesitate? How can you delay in a question so momentous, in an issue so tremendous?

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

WHEN you have renewed and ratified your baptismal vows and promises in the solemn rite of Confirmation, you are immediately invited, for the support and comfort of your Christian life, to partake of the Lord's Supper. I do not see how it can ever be made consistent with a proper sense of duty to put off an acceptance of this invitation, and yet I know there are many who do neglect it, allowing months, and, in some instances, years, to pass away before they come to the Holy Table.

In urging this great duty upon you, it cannot be expected that I will present any new motives, or produce considerations which you have not heard before; but, by specially bringing the subject to your notice, and reminding you of such particulars as are most important, and directly appealing to your judgment and sense of duty, I may possibly speak a word which, by the blessing of God, will not be without the desired effect.

In the first place, then, let me remind you that the observance of this sacrament is laid upon all men by the expressed will of our Lord and Saviour. As you well know, it was His solemn command:

"Do this in remembrance of me." Without going one step further, this should be sufficient. If it had been indeed but the expression of a *wish* on the part of our dying Redeemer, it ought to be enough. But it is more—it is His *command*, so understood and so obeyed by His disciples, beyond all doubt.

Perhaps, however, you are willing to acknowledge that it was binding upon those to whom it was immediately given, but question whether it was intended to be of lasting or permanent obligation. Aside, then, from the fact that it was received and handed down through all the first ages of the Church as a perpetual duty, hear what St. Paul says: "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Now, he would not have used this language if this solemn commemoration of the death of Christ were not intended to be of perpetual obligation upon Christians, to be observed even till our Lord comes to Judgment. So that the contrary idea is unsupported either by Scripture or history, and is in truth contradictory of both.

It is, then, our Lord's command, and of perpetual obligation: just as much so as the observance of the Sabbath or Baptism, or reading of the Scriptures, or any other positive duty. And if this be so, how can you be excused for neglecting it? I have no need to insist upon the authority of Him who gave this command, for I am addressing those who acknowledge that authority, and who know that it was never exercised except in purest love and mercy.

Think, then, how inconsistent with your own attachment to the cause of Christ's religion; nay, how dangerous to that cause itself your neglect would be in this particular. You do a great many things, I doubt not, because you simply believe it to be the will of God that you should do them. Why should

you stop at *this*, which plainly rests upon the same ground? You expect to be saved in the great day of account through the merits of Christ, conditionally upon your having endeavored faithfully, so far as you could discover and learn it, to do the Divine will; but here is a clear and most affecting instance of positive and habitual neglect to meet you in that awful day. O, I do beseech you, reflect upon this as you value eternal peace.

Again, let me remind you of the purpose of our observing this Holy Institution.

We cannot suppose that it was so solemnly appointed to commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ merely as an historical event. Not but that it would have a just claim upon our obedience even in this view; but we must go much further than this. We must consider what those sufferings meant, the end for which that death was borne. When we commemorate the death of Christ in this Institution, it is to celebrate and exhibit perpetually before mankind the great fact of our Redemption, the work of atonement for the sins of the world wrought out by the passion and blood shedding of Jesus, the Lamb of God, "whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of Heaven." Now, whether as regarding yourselves or others, there is here a reason, than which none can be stronger, for complying with this Holy and most significant solemnity. You will not pretend that you yourselves have any other hope, or ground for hope of pardon and salvation, than that furnished by the merits and sacrifice of Christ. Yet how can you entertain this hope, with what confidence can you rely upon that sacrifice, so long as you refuse to avow your faith in it, or even recognise it as a fact, in the way which Christ Himself appointed for this very purpose?

And while you think of this with reference to yourselves, reflect also upon the effect of your conduct upon others. They, too, must be saved through faith in the merits of Christ, or perish. It is not with them any more than it is with you, a *secret* confession of this momentous truth that will answer in the sight of God. That confession must be made openly, publicly, that all may see and know it. Look, then, at your fellow beings, perishing all around you, and consider that, almost without a doubt, some of them might be converted and saved through your example; while, now, it is more than equally probable, that many are excusing themselves in habitual carelessness by observing your neglect of a duty which they know is enjoined by the religion of Christ. Especially worthy is this point of the serious consideration of those who are parents. As a fact, the sons in a family, almost without an exception, follow the footsteps of the father in regard or disregard of the outward ordinances and institutions of religion. But what parent—what father, in these days of increasing ungodliness and peril to souls, would not be made happier by seeing his son fixed in true religious obedience? What parent would not rejoice to find a permanent safeguard, embracing the immortal interests of their child? What father would not feel that he could die more peacefully, knowing that his son had entered and was walking faithfully and manfully in the divinely-appointed and blessed ways of everlasting life and happiness? Greatly does it depend upon you, O ye fathers! Little of that comfort and satisfaction and peace can you hope to enjoy, if you yourselves fail to set the example.

Finally, let me remind you that this Institution is something still more than an outward and visible memorial. It is a *Sacrament*: that is, a means of

grace, wherein are conveyed to every worthy partaker the spiritual blessings which the consecrated symbols of bread and wine represent and betoken.

But that word *worthy*,—the *worthy* partaker:—there, with many of you, lies the great difficulty. What then is meant by the word *worthy*? If you regard it as meaning one who is already free from sin, or who, at least, has reached some high degree of sanctity, doubtless you cannot but wonder at the presumption of some whom you see partaking of this sacrament, knowing that they fall far short of this standard of qualification. But, if such be your view, let me assure you that you are taking a wrong view of this subject. You are regarding this Institution as though it were the *end* instead of the *means* to the end. You are requiring as qualifications, attainments which cannot, by your own belief, be reached without that very grace and assistance of God, for conveying which to man, this sacrament was ordained. When we say *worthy*, we mean precisely one who has this high view of Christian character, but who feels his own weakness, and sinfulness, and need of Divine aid; one who comes bending under a lively sense of his imperfections, and seeks here, in the way of submission and an humble obedience to Christ's command, the requisite help. This sense of *unworthiness* is the essential part of the *worthiness* which qualifies,—is the very consciousness that persuades us to come to the Holy Table. If you feel indeed that you are sinful and helpless, how can you expect to be ever relieved, so long as you neglect the provisions which God has given for your relief? It is because we are *unworthy*,—because we are imperfect, and always going astray, and covering ourselves with shame and trouble, that this table is spread for us, that “to our great and endless comfort” we may remember

the Love of Him who only was Holy on this earth, and “that we are made clean through His most precious blood.” Here, therefore, instead of finding an obstacle, you should find very great encouragement; instead of raising an objection, you should be persuaded, even by your own interest, to obey this gracious injunction of your Saviour.

It is quite true that we may not be able to discover what connection there can be between an outward ordinance and spiritual blessings. You will recollect that Naaman stumbled at a similar difficulty in his own mind, but was taught better. And we are to observe that it is not our mere observance of an external ceremony that is pleasing to God; but it is the temper and disposition of heart which it manifests—the faith and humility which it proves—that is acceptable in His sight and procures His favor.

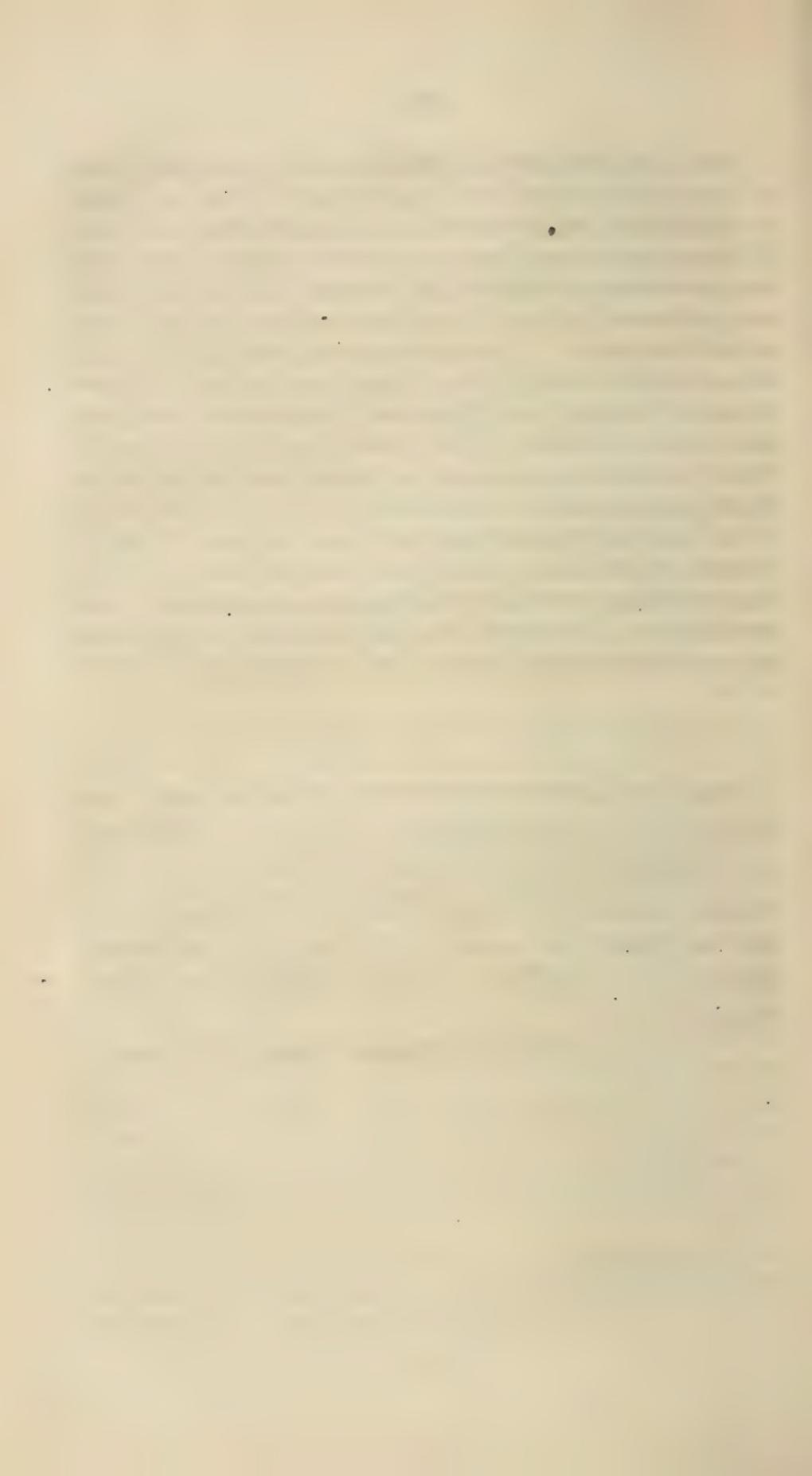
Our Lord might have instituted a memorial of his death which, by solemn pomp and magnificence of ceremony, would have gained the observance of thousands where now it has that of one. But the very need which existed, and therefore the very end of His religion, was to reduce our *pride*, and form hearts anew in the lowly trust and confidence of a childlike faith and obedience. His institutions, therefore, while full of the most sublime truths, and exciting within the intelligent and thoughtful religious mind the deepest devotional feelings and most interesting reflections, are yet characterized by the utmost simplicity. The considerate and wise will view this as one of their chief excellencies,—the result of Divine wisdom and mercy, providing for the immortal interests of a fallen, but proud and rebellious race.

I appeal to you by all these considerations, as reasonable, as responsible, and dying beings, do not neglect this, your most bounden duty.

And may the foregoing reflections upon each one of the subjects to which I have drawn your thoughts be blessed to your present peace and eternal welfare. If these few pages have awakened within you any consciousness of neglect, any sense of obligation not yet performed, do not lay them aside to be lost sight of and forgotten. You know how easy it is to put these solemn things away from our minds. How often is this done, until the heart becomes so hardened that no impression can be made upon it. O fearful state! Beware, even as you value the salvation of your precious soul,—beware of everything that leads to it. By all your hopes for the Judgment Day, I beseech you do not stifle your convictions of duty. Do not refuse to follow the solemn dictates of your conscience. Do not turn a deaf ear to the gracious promptings within you of God's Most Holy Spirit.

Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service : Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises ; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Collect for Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.



7

THE
NATURE AND BENEFITS
OF
Holy Baptism.



NEW YORK

WE yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate *this Infant* with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own *child* by adoption, and to incorporate *him* into thy Holy Church. And humbly we beseech thee to grant, that *he*, being dead unto sin, and living unto Righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin ; and that as *he* is made *Partaker* of the Death of thy Son, he may also be Partaker of his Resurrection ; so that finally, with the residue of thy Holy Church, *he* may be an *Inheritor* of thine everlasting Kingdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Holy Baptism.

PART I.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

THAT regeneration is the inward and spiritual grace of baptism, and so, as a matter of course, accompanies the due reception of that sacrament—accompanies it, *i. e.* whenever no obstruction hinders its operation—seems to have been the doctrine of the whole Church from the earliest ages. Beyond all reasonable doubt, it is the doctrine of our own branch of it—a consideration which must have very serious weight with us, her members.

I do not now wish so much to argue in favor of baptismal regeneration, as to show what it is, and what are its place and proportion in the Christian scheme. Many excellent persons are likely to be convinced, not so much by argument, as by apprehending the true view. Once they catch even a glimpse of that, they are led to see how scriptural, how holy, how humbling, yet elevating, it is. Its harmony with the rest of the faith begins to be felt. Next the quantity of Scripture which asserts or implies it begins to rise into sight, and gradually do the difficulties and objections they once thought so forcible, drop away and disappear. But to effect this result it will be needful that we go into one or two points that may not seem at first very much connected with the subject. In the case supposed, it is more than likely, that some other parts of the objectors' theology are at fault, and that therein lies the mischief. So vitally connected are the several parts of the Christian scheme, that a man's view of one is nearly sure to affect his view of all the rest. Therefore, it has struck

me as a deficiency in controversialists on this subject,—that, in treating of it, they have, for the most part, treated of it exclusively. This may have, perhaps, been justifiable in disputationes scientifically theological. In me, who aim at giving a practical view, it would not be so; and I therefore propose tracing the scriptural doctrine of regeneration to what I conceive to be its root—the human nature of our Lord and Saviour. The general position I take, is this,—that, in that human nature, mankind is generically new-born. When this great principle is fairly apprehended, I feel sure that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration will be seen in its true light, and the general proportion of faith will rise into view.

I.—OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE NEW ADAM, AND HUMAN NATURE GENERICALLY NEW BORN IN HIM.

ONE great misconception on the subject of regeneration has been the supposing it a grace known to the sons of men before the gospel dispensation. Hence those who deny that baptism is the ordained channel for its conveyance, appeal not only to cases in the history of the New Testament, where they conceive that the second birth took place before baptism, but, to the saints of the elder covenant, in whom, if it took place at all, it must have taken place altogether without baptism. In other words, they identify any gracious influence of the Holy Spirit producing holiness with regeneration.

But this, though a common, is, I feel persuaded, an altogether modern, view of the subject; and on such a question, I need scarcely say, that, to be altogether modern, must be to be wrong. Truly catholic Christians have, in all ages, felt that the *Christian Church* enjoys a gift of the Spirit that was unknown to the ages and generations before—and the first entrance on this gift they have ever identified with the regeneration on which our Lord insists. And no wonder they have felt thus, seeing that such is the uniform teaching of holy Scripture; for the prophets pointed to a new and abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, as the great characteristic of those gospel ages which they foretold. An indwelling of the Spirit, never enjoyed before, is surely pointed out by Je-

remiah (xxxi. 33,) as the very badge of each person taken into the new covenant of the latter days. Joel speaks in similar language; while the Baptist distinguishes Messiah from all other teachers sent from God, as the one that "shall baptize with the Holy Ghost."* Nay, further, the New Testament very clearly indicates, not only that none living before, but that none living on earth along with our Lord, partook as yet of the regeneration. His own words were, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit,—words which have been thus explained by a very profound writer: †—“As long as the fulness of the Divine nature was hidden under the guise of an earthly and human existence, this Divine efficacy of the Messiah did not reveal itself, the Divine life was then His own exclusive possession among men. As He Himself declared, the seed must first fall into the earth and die, in order to bring forth more fruit. It was only after He should have ascended into heaven, that the glorified Son of Man would be able to bestow that baptism of the Spirit in its Divine and invisible efficacy.” Elsewhere, we read of the Spirit not being yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified, and His own words, in His great paschal discourse, are as follows:—“I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.” In the same discourse the Spirit’s dwelling *with* the disciples during our Lord’s

* Compare Acts i. 5.

† Neander, Ecel. Hist. Vol i. p. 357, Rose’s translation. I cite Neander on the present occasion, not merely as being what I have styled him in the text, “a very profound writer,”—and so far, a powerful witness in favor of the view I am just now trying to exhibit; but also because no man will say that he has a bias in favor of high Church or Sacramental theology. The known laxity of his principles on these subjects, excusable from what we cannot but deem his unsatisfactory position in the Christian world, makes his testimony all the stronger in favor of any scriptural principle on which part of that scheme is based. In the present instance, it has been given him to see a principle lying close to the roots of baptismal regeneration—viz., that regeneration itself is a benefit so peculiar to the Christian covenant, as not to have been enjoyed even by the apostles during their Lord’s sojourn upon earth.

earthly sojourn is distinguished from His being in them after the day of Pentecost. And indeed, throughout it, the promised gift of the Spirit is distinguished *in kind* from any thing that had been ever enjoyed before, and also announced as one for all ages, so that it can have been no mere miraculous one. Throughout the Epistles the spiritual condition of Christians is in the same way distinguished in kind from that of the ages and generations who lived before them, as may be seen in the following instances. St. Paul uses this language about the privileges *peculiar* to the Gospel. “ Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all ; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world : but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.—Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” (Gal. iv. 1—7.) And again, “ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come : and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church.” (Eph. i. 18—22.) In this latter place, the working of God’s power in believers is declared to be according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places ; *i. e.* it seems to be an offshoot, so to speak, of the Resurrection and Ascension. But this whole Epistle ought to be carefully considered, in reference to the truth, that regeneration is peculiar to the Gospel.

Once more, we are taught of Old Testament worthies, that “these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect,” (Heb. xi. 39, 40:) while of him than whom there had not arisen a greater among them that are born of woman, we are told, that “he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

From all this we cannot but gather, that, since the day of Pentecost, there has been a dispensation, the subjects of which are in a condition above and beyond what had ever been experienced on earth before; and that this difference has consisted in their possession of the Holy Spirit, who had indeed previously operated on men’s hearts, but had never been *given* to them. There had never been *a birth* of the Spirit. Let it be observed, that I am not seeking to place prophets and patriarchs, and righteous men of old, on a lower level than is ordinarily done; but I wish to set Christians on a higher. I believe that the former were, indeed, renewed unto holiness; and renewed, as alone they could be, by the Spirit of holiness; but as I have already said, that Spirit, though operating upon them, had never been given to them. They had Him not in His fulness. He moved, as it were, among men, but had not yet come down to dwell with and in them. His workings, as far as they could calculate, were but stray visitations; not an abiding presence, a continued inhabitation. The effects of the fall had not yet been recovered—man, even when in some measure accepted by his Maker, was still an outcast from Eden, still exiled from the eternal home and family of the blessed. The fallen root was not yet taken away,—the spiritual Man not yet revealed—the spiritual constitution not yet provided. I do not deny that, in the other world, saints of the older covenant are, in some way unknown to us, engrafted on the fulness of Christ’s body, and made partakers of all those privileges which He died to purchase. I do not deny this, for our hope is to “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. But most assuredly, *while on earth* they “received not the promise”—while on earth they had not “come unto Mount Sion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and all that bright and blissful fellowship on which

we enter there. This could not be till the day of Christ Jesus, the new Spiritual Man.

Regeneration, then, was delayed till the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. The man Christ Jesus is Himself the regeneration of the human race. In His human nature mankind was generically new born. He came in our nature for this very purpose, that He might sanctify it, make it acceptable and spiritual. He came to be a second Adam—a new type or exemplar of man—a new beginning of the race—a new living root out of which mankind may grow, instead of the old deadly one—a new holy and heavenly image, to which mankind may be conformed, instead of the old defiled and carnal one. He is the true Man, in whom the eternal Mind sees His great idea of humanity brought entirely out; and those who, being engrafted upon Him, continue in union with Him, and grow out of Him, attain in their measure and degree, this true manhood. What He is, they to some extent become. They are predestinated to be conformed to His image, “that he might be the first-born among many brethren.”

II—BAPTISM CONSIDERED AS THE SIGN OF REDEEMED HUMANITY, AND THE MEANS OF BEING ENGRAFTED UPON CHRIST.

Now, observe the Son of God, thus coming into human nature, as a new and sanctifying root and representative of it, has sanctified it altogether. He has conferred an universal benefit on it. What He took was not the nature of this or that man, or class of men, but human nature generally—the nature of which every man is a sharer. He thus manifested Himself as an universal Deliverer, as one who came to reconcile the whole world to God, as the Saviour, not of some men, but of *men*. We must run counter to the whole New Testament, if we make Him other than an universal Redeemer; and therefore no man need for a moment doubt, that he is himself comprised in the scheme of salvation. He needs no other warrant for claiming all Christian privileges than his human nature—since human nature is that which Christ

has redeemed and hallowed.* Therefore, simply as a sharer in human nature, may he, believing in Christ, offer himself for baptism—the apostolical commission being, not to go to some favored nation or class, but to “go make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” Baptism is thus the great sign of redeemed humanity. It takes man simply as man, as a sharer in that nature which Christ took, and has rescued, and glorified. It therefore admits each individual man to this new heavenly manhood. As Christ took the nature of that man, and died to save him, only his own obstinate rejection of the boon can hinder his obtaining it. And therefore whoever receives baptism with a true faith—*i. e.* who-ever does not turn away from Christ and His grace—is regenerated thereby. In the man Christ Jesus, the human nature he bears was generically new-born, and he himself has become engrafted on Him, by the right of His own appointment, and therefore has entered on a second birth, become a follower of Christ in the re-generation. The very first specified benefit of baptism is, that we thereby are “made members of Christ.” We are engrafted on Him, the true Vine, and if we but abide in Him, we shall bear fruit through Him. The living sap will reach to the very smallest branch that remains unsevered, either by outward abscission, or inward obstruction, from the stem or the root. If, therefore, no man fail of the grace of the new covenant, from original defect, so to speak—*i. e.* from not being one of those for whom it was designed,—or from want of will in Christ that he should receive it,—if nothing but his own perversity can hinder the effect of baptism,—it is obvious that all infants must be considered regenerate in that sacrament. They cannot hinder its due effect—

* This does not involve a denial of much peculiar preparation being necessary on the part of adults before they can be admitted to baptism. It merely asserts what is their *essential* claim to such admission. As *men*, as *human beings*, they become candidates,—by a tried, penitent, and believing temper, they prove that they themselves enter into this—that they see how manhood has been redeemed and made holy, and that they themselves wish for this true manhood—that they will cleave to it and cherish it, if we admit them to the appointed initiation—*the birth* into it; and, therefore, after such trial, we do admit them

they cannot refuse Christ or His grace. The only cause, therefore, that can render it inoperative on an adult has no place in them. So that if we are to deny their regeneration in baptism, it must be for a totally different reason—it must be because we consider them without the scope of the sacrament, and incapable of its grace.

III—INFANT BAPTISM

I do not now mean to enter on all the arguments that may be advanced for infant baptism. Undoubtedly there are strong *indications* in Scripture favorable to the practice. It comes to us also armed with Church authority from the very first days of the gospel dispensation—a sanction which no judicious Christian will treat lightly, and to which our own Church attaches weight generally, and peculiarly in the present case. By these and by other considerations, her members may well satisfy themselves of the propriety of the practice. At present, I mean to justify it, by following out the course of thought in which we have now been engaged, by showing how it is involved in the very idea of baptism as the sign of redeemed humanity, and in that very idea of redeemed humanity whereof baptism is the sign. For, did not Christ redeem human nature altogether? And if so, must He not have redeemed it from its very roots and beginnings? Can we fix a time, subsequent to his birth, in a man's mortal career, at which his human nature commenced? If we cannot, then no more can we fix a time in which there may not be claimed for him the redemption of that nature which is in Christ, whereof baptism is at once the sign and the seal. Did not the Son of God as He became a man, begin even as others, by being a little infant; and if His manhood has consecrated the manhood of His brethren, why should we doubt that His childhood too has consecrated their childhood, His infancy, their infancy? St. Irenæus thus descants on our redemption through the human nature of our Lord. “He came to save all through Himself; all, I say, who through Him are born anew unto God, infants and young children, and boys and youths, and elders. Therefore, He passed

through every age, and was made an infant for infants, sanctifying infants, a little child for children, sanctifying their age, and, at the same time, being made an example to them of piety, righteousness and subjection,—a youth for youths, being made an example to such, and sanctifying them to the Lord.” In treating which passage, Neander comes to the very principle before us, which I maintain to be the sufficient basis of infant baptism. “ We find the essentially Christian notion, from which infant baptism would derive itself spontaneously, the more Christianity penetrated into domestic life, viz., that Christ, by means of that Divine life which He communicated to human nature, and revealed in it, has sanctified that nature from the very first seed of its development.”

And this principle is in strict analogy with our mode of viewing infants in other relations. A child is born into his earthly family, and considered a member of that, though all-unconscious of the fact himself; and the peculiar family life on which he thus enters, with its distinguishing character, whatever that may be, is gradually developed in him, dawning with the first dawn of his consciousness, “ growing with his growth, and strengthening with his strength.” So of his national life, with all its peculiarity.—He does not enter on that at some marked critical period of his after course, but he is born into it from the very first, and silently and unceasingly does he grow up an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a German, as the case may be. Nay more, he is, as we all admit, a human being from the first,—the germ of the full-grown man; and all orthodox Christians believe, born by nature to the sin and woe of humankind, though he has committed no acts of sin himself. Now, if that unconscious age do not preclude original sin in a first birth, why should it be held to preclude grace and righteousness in a second? To this we think must the decriers of infant baptism be brought. They must either deny original sin,—deny that infants need Christ or the grace of his gospel, or else they must hold that there is a stage of human nature to which His redemption has not extended. If unconsciousness preclude the operation of grace in any sense whatever, it must equally preclude the operation of sin in any sense whatever.

Therefore, I say, that in asserting the regeneration of infants in

baptism, I am asserting a fact in strict analogy with every other fact connected with their social and moral being. As we believe that from their first birth they belong to the families in which they are severally born, and are ordinarily destined to grow up with the peculiar constitutions, characters and tendencies of those families,—as we believe that, from their first birth, they belong to their respective nations, and are destined gradually, with their increasing age, to exhibit the peculiar stamps of those nations upon them,—as finally, we believe that, from their first birth, they belong to humankind, contain in themselves the germs of its distinctive character, and share mysteriously in its sin and woe, so we believe that, even at that unconscious age, we can make them Christians by a second birth, can impart to them in germ that sacred gift, which duly tended and fostered, will counteract the poison of their nature, and transform them into the image of God. It is our privilege, through the benefit of their second, to anticipate the growing evils that result from their first birth, and overcome them with good.

IV—BAPTISM CONSIDERED AS ADMISSION INTO THE CHURCH.

We have hitherto been considering baptism as an engrafting of our human nature on that of our Lord, in whom that nature has been generically born anew. We have now to view it as an admission into the Church. This, at first sight, is a different aspect of the rite, though in reality, as we shall soon see, it is but a feature of the other. Meanwhile, let us proceed to its consideration.

It is frequently asserted, in opposition to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, that the meaning and design of baptism is simply to admit into the visible Church. Now, I might meet this by protesting against exclusive statements of its design. Because baptism was ordained by way of admission into the visible Church, have we any right to say that it was ordained for no purpose besides? But let us take the statement as it stands.—Baptism is admission into the visible Church of Christ. What does that mean? I maintain it means admission into all spiritual

blessings whatsoever, that it means nothing short of that comprehensive benefit we call regeneration ; for the visible Church is the great depository of all the promises—it is “none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven.” It is the ark of the everlasting covenant, the shrine of the Eternal Spirit, the region of promise and blessing, the new and better Eden, the kingdom of heaven upon earth. There is no distinction between the visible Church and the invisible, further than what consists in the presence of frailty and sin, even in the best members of the former, and the fact that many, not outwardly severed from her pale, ~~may~~ even now be so inwardly. The invisible Church is but the genuine healthy visible, to be at last altogether purged and perfected. And therefore infants, who, as I have already said, cannot refuse or turn away from Christ, are regenerated in the very fact of being ~~mis~~ members of the visible Church. Born far from God, they are now brought very nigh unto Him. Born exiles, they are now taken into the everlasting covenant. Born children of wrath, they hereby are “made children of grace.” Born to an inheritance of sin and sorrow, and darkness and death, they now enter on an inheritance of holiness and happiness, and light and life everlasting. So truly is the day of their baptism, the day to them of a new and better birth,—a birth not unto the world, the flesh, and the devil, but unto God.

And still keeping on the position that is granted to us by our opponents, that baptism is an admission into the visible Church, I go on to say that, as such, it is, as we have already viewed it, an engrafting of our human nature on the human nature of our Lord. For the Church is His mystical body. By her He is still spiritually present on earth. Through her He acts ; in her do we obtain contact and union with Him. As He is the Redeemer of human nature, so is she the redemption for it that He has effected. The Church Catholic is the development and portion of restored and regenerate mankind. It is the regenerate society, and its relations the result and fruit of the new calling and the new capacities which human nature has received. It is also, and by consequence, the great witness throughout the world for the redemption of humanity—everywhere dealing with man, simply as man, discarding all conventional distinctions, whether of nation or of

class—looking in each person simply at that human nature which the Son of God has arrested and made His own, and by doing so, has redeemed and regenerated, and dealing with each person accordingly. The Church is the great and the only society that looks simply at Humanity, and its relations the only ones we contract with each other simply as men.

Further, as the Church is in covenant with God, so does each member she receives become individually in covenant with Him also. Therefore baptism, duly received, conveys regeneration, inasmuch as the recipient is thereby taken into covenant with God, and into a covenant too of grace and mercy,—moreover a spiritual covenant.

V.—BAPTISM GIVES THE COVENANTED PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

And in close connexion with this last view, indeed as one of its capital features, baptism is to be considered as conveying to us the Holy Ghost. The baptized person is born into the covenant of grace, and, by the terms of that covenant, has a right to the indwelling and aid of the Blessed Spirit. Consequently, whether or not he will put them to use, he receives in baptism powers which by nature he could not have. Born carnal, he has now a spiritual constitution, with spiritual faculties—faculties which he could never have inherited by his first birth, and whereby he can apprehend heavenly truth, and discern, obey, and love the spiritual law.

But this great benefit of the second birth, the conferring on men a spiritual constitution, with spiritual powers, is of no more avail to the recipient, unless he choose to exercise that constitution, and put forth those powers, than would be the natural constitution and powers he receives from his first birth, unless they were similarly exercised and put forth. The difference between the two cases, is, that the latter is to agree at extent hypothetical ; the former, alas, is actual and frequent. No man born into this breathing world ever failed to put forth some of the powers that he has in relation to that world. Born to the light and the air, he has no inducement not to open his eyes to the one, and to

inhale the other. But the case can be supposed of his refusing to do either of these things ; and though he would thereby forego the benefits of his natural birth, the birth itself would still have taken place. And this, which is little more than a hypothetical case as regards our natural birth, is actually the case with numbers of us as regards our spiritual. Born into a spiritual world, with spiritual sunshine, and a spiritual atmosphere all around, we yet madly shut our eyes to the one, and refuse to breathe the other. But, in this case, as in the other, the fact of birth remains unaffected.

This, then, is baptismal regeneration, viewed in reference to the gift of the Spirit. That gift is conveyed, a power is present, present in virtue of a Divine covenant, with every baptised man, by whose aid he can overcome all sin, and grow up unto perfect holiness. He may neglect that power, he may allow sin to separate him from its gracious presence, and then repentance may remove the barrier once again, and the powers of the Spirit once more be with the man. This, I think, is a very important truth in regard to the covenant of baptism, that it abides on a man even while he is sinning away his privileges, and should he not have succeeded in doing so completely, is ready to meet his repentance, and to be with him, so often as he really wishes to be with it. And I take this opportunity of observing, that this covenanted presence of the Spirit in each baptized man is the only presence of the Spirit of which we at all know in any man. Modern thinkers seem often to regard the saint as individually different from other men, instead of being admitted, along with others, to a common portion of holiness and blessedness, to which he continually cleaves, and from which he derives daily life and strength. There is nothing that I know of to warrant the image under which regeneration is apt to present itself—that of a man changed, if I may be allowed the expression, in the eye of a naturalist ; no longer the same human being with his fellows, but endowed with a permanent gift which they have not. I do not believe that the greatest saint has the Holy Spirit otherwise than as a continually illapsing gift, in virtue of his continual cleaving to Christ. He can no more live on the strength of yesterday, than

he can live on the meal of yesterday. He can no more live on any thing in himself spiritually, than he can live on any thing in himself naturally. He cannot keep up his bodily life without again and again deriving nourishment from the external world; no more can he keep up his spiritual, without again and again deriving nourishment from the Church, which is the external world of his soul, and by means of continued fellowship with which he continually receives the Holy Spirit. The ripened saint differs indeed from the newly born in growth, strength, acquirement of graces, and other blessed results of a long presence of that Spirit; but he in no way differs from him as to the mode in, or the terms on, which he enjoys that presence; each has in it virtue of the same covenant of baptism, each has it as a gift not made once for all, but received daily in answer to daily prayer,—each has it not as an individual, but as a member of Christ's Church; each has it not for himself, but as being willing to be one among many brethren, and because the Holy Spirit is, through the grace of the gospel, a common portion to himself and those brethren.

VI.—BAPTISM CONSIDERED AS CONVEYING ADOPTION

There remains yet another view before we complete this branch of the subject. By christian baptism we become children of God. This is one of the views which, although here reserved to the last, is put prominently forward by our Church. By nature we are children of wrath, by grace we become children of God. This, of course, follows from all that has been said, more especially from what has been urged respecting our brotherhood to Christ. If He be our Brother, then must God be our Father.

And the same thing follows from viewing baptism as an incorporation into the Church. The Church is “the household of God;” and they who, by nature, were “strangers and foreigners,” are by baptism brought into that blessed household, adopted into the great rejoicing family that has Christ for the first-born, and God as its Father. I will not enlarge more upon this point at

present, partly because it is obvious ; partly because I shall have occasion to return to it in the course of the practical recapitulation which will form the second part of this treatise. Meanwhile, I may observe, that, so impressed was the early Church with this truth, that the knowledge of the Lord's Prayer was only imparted to converts when they were ripe for baptism. It was called *the prayer of the regenerate*, because none other could say, *Our Father, which art in heaven*, with full meaning to the words.

PART II.

PRACTICAL RESULTS OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

We have now seen how fitly the day of a man's baptism may be styled the day of his new and better birth. He rises from the heavenly washing with new relations, new prospects, new powers. He is engrafted on the human nature of Him in whom human nature is generically born anew. He has received the great appointed sign and seal of redeemed manhood—he is incorporated into the Church, the holy and heavenly kingdom, in which are all spiritual blessings—he is thereby taken into a covenant of spirituality and grace, and so has had such a donation of the Spirit made over to him as entitles him to count on the Spirit's aid whenever he really wishes to do those good things which he cannot in his own strength. We have seen, too, that such a presence of the Spirit is the only one that any Christian enjoys,—a presence pledged by covenant, from which sin must separate—to which true repentance can restore him—not an abiding peculiarity of any man, distinguishing him from his fellows. We have further seen, that one most gracious and comforting feature of regeneration in baptism is our adoption into God's family—our right to call God our Father. Let us now consider the practical results that follow from this.

I.—ASSURANCE.

I consider the first of these results to be, that each baptized man ought to feel assured of being in God's grace and favor. This, my first head, will be found really to comprehend the remaining ones, but for many reasons it requires separate consideration.

I think nothing is more observable than the way in which the true notion of the Church and the Sacraments meets all the spiritual cravings of man, and how, in consequence, it will be found to present us with the truth, of which many of our favorite notions of the enthusiast are but distorted phantoms. And this, I think, both the charitable and the profitable way of looking at the several forms of fanaticism around us. To regard them with nothing but contempt is unworthy of a Christian—to suppose that they present us with unmixed error, is unlike a wise man. However unfounded, and however mischievous we may justly deem them, yet, if they be taking a firm hold of earnest minds, it is scarcely possible but that they are distortions of some truths, of which we shall find the proper places and proportions in the orthodox doctrine and scheme of the Church. Thus, when we see any particular form of enthusiastic error, may we not only be the better qualified for rescuing its victims, inasmuch as we show that we can sympathize with them, and that we hold the truth whereof the partial presence in it is making their error dear to their hearts, in a better and purer way than they do; but we can benefit ourselves: a fanatical delusion may be made the means to us of illustrating scriptural truth, because when we see it, we shall be led to look in the orthodox system for the substance of which it is the distorted reflection.

Now, this is very much the case with what is commonly meant by the doctrine of assurance. Many, as is notorious, hold that each believer ought to be certain of his own salvation. There is a large sect which makes this doctrine one of its distinctive badges;* while many belonging to other persuasions, and some in the

* I mean the Wesleyans. At the same time it must be observed, that, as they do not hold the doctrine, of final perseverance, their doctrine of assurance is

Church, but of a sectarian turn of mind, embrace and proclaim it. I imagine, however, that most of my readers will agree with me in rejecting it, *as thus held*, on grounds both of Scripture and prudence; they will say with me, that it is both false and dangerous. No sober Christian will fail to observe, that the New Testament not only permits, but prescribes, doubts as to our spiritual condition,—doubts which even those who have advanced furthest in the Divine life will sometimes rationally feel. Besides, the New Testament knows nothing, beyond the Christian's answer of a good conscience towards God, of peculiar reasons for confidence, peculiar privileges, or peculiar experiences; and, unless there be some general ground on which others may rest this assurance, equally with the flighty Christian who proclaims his own possession of it, it must be vain and illusory, must create its own grounds, must be itself its own foundation.*

By giving such replies as these, we do, indeed, refute the sectarian doctrine of assurance; but nevertheless I think we miss the mark. Our brother has in him the dawning of a truth on this subject, and he feels that, unless rude violence is to be done to the language of the New Testament, there is something revealed in it which the sinner is not merely to hope for, but to appropriate;—that the high privileges it proclaims are spoken of as the *known* possession of some among the sons of men—that the spirit of adoption which it demands, implies, and is identical with, the assurance for which he contends. I believe that there is no effectual way of answering him, except by preaching to him

both less mischievous, and nearer the truth in the case of those who accompany the one tenet with the other. The Wesleyans err in grounding their assurance on inward frames and feelings, instead of on the outward, definite undeluding, pledges of God's grace.

* This is very plain when assurance is declared to be of the essence of faith. Till he possesses faith, a man is held to be without the pale of God's favor; but to real faith, an assurance that he is in that favor, is said to be necessary. He is, therefore, to believe that which is a lie of himself, up to the moment of his believing it! Surely an absurdity like this carries with it its own refutation.

the orthodox and catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration. By the Church's jealousy over that doctrine, and the loud clear voice in which she proclaims it, he may be made to perceive that she recognises the whole of his truth, clearing it of the accompanying error—that she both keeps it purer and develops it better than he does himself.

What, then, is this truth felt after by the enthusiast, and fully brought out in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration ?

It cannot be a truth having direct reference to the question of any man's final salvation, for that the Church holds to be in each case contingent and uncertain. Scripture has revealed of none of us, that in the great day he is certainly to be placed at the Judge's right hand, and where Scripture is silent we must be silent too, and "judge nothing before the time." Yet there is something gracious and gladdening of which we are to be assured. We are to be assured of our being in God's present grace and favour, however it is to be with us at the last. We are to "know and believe in the love that God hath to us." We are by no means to doubt our having been made "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." And therefore is each one of us to say "Our Father" in the spirit of a son ; he is to serve God "in holiness, *without fear* ;" he is to rejoice in the certainty of his redemption and regeneration ; he is to feel assured that in him the old lineage from Adam is cut off, and that he is engrafted on the new ; he is to "walk worthily of God, *who hath called* him to his kingdom and glory ;" he is to have his citizenship in heaven ; "for" he has "come unto Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God,—the heavenly Jerusalem." He is to rejoice in the Lord, who hath done such great things for him and his brethren, even while remaining in some uncertainty as to whether in his case those great things may not be found at last to have been done in vain, even while he counts not himself to have apprehended, even while he remembers, and remembers with fear and trembling, that his own perversity may yet cheat him of his crown, that his own act and deed may yet cancel his right to the heavenly inheritance. In short, by the

doctrine of baptismal regeneration, scripturally understood and practically enforced, we answer the legitimate cravings of the enthusiast—we give him all the assurance he has a right to ask, or really needs, for the enlargement of his heart; not the assurance of his own final salvation, for that we cannot give him, but the assurance of a present true grace of God, in which he may stand—of an ascertained regeneration, and an ascertained adoption by a loving Father who is in heaven.

I do not mean to say that the Christian is not to look forward to final acceptance with joyful hope. And obviously the farther he advances in the Divine life, the more must the grounds of such hope be multiplied, and the more confidently may he look forward to death as for him but a falling asleep in the Lord, and the resurrection as the day that is to bring to him his crown and his glory. But what I contend for is, that, even in the beginning of his course, when there can hardly be so confident an expectation, the Christian is nevertheless, in virtue of his baptism, to pray and act in the spirit of adoption,—to begin running in the path of God's commandments with his heart set at liberty—to feel assured that he has nothing to wait for, but may move at once in the direction of good, with strength ever present to sustain him,—that he has spiritual powers at command just as he has physical, and that, in both cases alike, he can ascertain his possession of such powers simply by exercising them.

And even should he, in spite of baptismal grace, have long lived merely to this world, he is yet, on being aroused to a sense of this, to believe that the covenant of baptism is still on him, and that he has but to resume his baptismal attitude to be replenished with baptismal grace. Nothing is more perverse than to urge the revolutions we see in certain persons, at some definite period of their after lives, from the service of sin and the world to that of Christ and of God, as an argument against baptismal regeneration. Rather are they wonderful manifestations of its power, such as we had no right to expect. We see that, even when a man has spent half a lifetime in neglect of his baptism, it can sometimes, even thus late, take effect upon him, and

produce, after long delay, many of its legitimate and blessed results.*

II.—SPIRITUALITY OF LIFE AND CONDUCT.

A second great duty resulting from baptismal regeneration is that of living spiritually. We are to believe that we are spiritual beings, with spiritual relations, and spiritual powers. And we are to believe and act on this, in spite of the presence and the power of a sensual nature, which is continually telling us the very contrary. The world and the flesh are continually saying that the attempt to live above them is a vain one—that they are and must be paramount so long as we are connected with them—that a spiritual life is impossible for us. We must meet such tyranny by calling our baptism to mind: we must remember that in baptism we died and were buried with Christ—that we cast away from us the things of the old man—that we renounced the former law of our being—that we rose from the baptismal laver to a life new, heavenly, and divine,—a life not of the flesh but of the Spirit,—a life of which the springs are not in this world but the other—a life “hid with Christ in God.” We have bade adieu to the flesh,—henceforth, with the Apostle, we are to “know no man after the flesh,” but to view ourselves and all around us in spiritual relations, and to cultivate union with our brethren by spiritual ties. Our citizenship is to be in heaven; to us all things have been made new, and all things of God, who hath reconciled us unto Himself by Jesus Christ.

III.—GREAT WATCHFULNESS OVER OURSELVES, AND DREAD OF FALLING INTO SIN.

A third very solemn duty is involved in the consciousness of

* The case of such is considered by St. Augustine, in his treatise, “*De Baptismo contra Donatistas*:” and I may take this opportunity of observing that, though we *certainty* affirm the presence of grace in baptism only in the case of infants, who interpose no obstacle, yet even an adult, receiving, through his impenitence and unbelief, nothing but a dead form of baptism, must yet, if mercifully brought out of such a condition, look not to certain vicissitudes of feeling, but to his baptism as the epoch of his second birth.

our baptismal regeneration. We have received unspeakable privileges, and we must be careful lest we cast them away. We must beware of neglecting them, trifling with them, or in any way misusing them. We are entrusted in our baptism with the pearl of great price, and woe to us if we part with it again. We are placed on the very pinnacle of spiritual exaltation ; and if we fall from it, how great, how ruinous, how utterly crushing that fall will be ! In proportion to the greatness of baptismal benefit, is the malignity and danger of sin wilfully persisted in after baptism. It is sinning against grace, and unless cured by a timely repentance, must therefore incur the “many stripes,” the “greater damnation.”

This is a view of Christian privileges which is continually presented to us in the New Testament. It will be found broadly and clearly exhibited in the opening verses of 1 Cor. x. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews throughout, a portion of Scripture which should be read with trembling, by every baptized man who is conscious that he is living in the service of self and of sin.

It may be said, (and with truth,) that in the Epistle in question a particular form of sin, apostacy, is aimed at, which cannot easily be committed now. To which I reply, that it cannot easily be committed now as it was then, by a single definite act ; but that, according to the principles of the New Testament, a long course of unrepented sin after baptism, amounts to apostacy, and will be treated as such. Of course we cannot judge when it amounts to this, even in ourselves ; and accordingly, with great propriety, we are prohibited by our Church from denying the grant of repentance to any who sin after baptism. Their seeking restoration is a pledge, as regards them, that the fearful result has not yet taken place ; while God’s still extending to them the tokens of His mercy, is a pledge, as regards Him, that He is still willing to be gracious. Blessed be God, we are permitted to believe this ; but nevertheless it remains true, that sin, in spite of privileges, has a peculiar character of malignity, and involves an especial danger over and above what must attach to it irrespectively of such privileges ; and that the New Testament regards all wilful sin after baptism in this light. We find nothing there like that modern teaching which treats impenitent and unrenewed Christians as those who have

never been within the fold. Such doctrine, as that the mass of those around have still to wait for their calling to gospel privileges, and their new birth in Christ, is indeed sure to meet with a favorable reception, if for no other reason, yet for this, that it gives them an excuse for continuing meanwhile in their sins. But Scripture speaks to us in other and much more awful language. It tells us that God's "Divine power hath given unto us *all* things that pertain unto life and godliness; and it warns us, that, if we perish at last, it will not be as those who were always outcasts, but as those who have thrown good things away that had been conferred—not as heathens, but as apostates. In short, our final ruin will be like our first—a fall—an exile from a happy home in which we were placed—a loss of that Divine favour which we did once enjoy. In *these* respects the second sentence of death will correspond to the first, but in *this* it will differ—it will be final, admitting of neither reverse nor mitigation! Warily, therefore, must the baptized man walk through this world of danger; most careful must he be of the jewel committed to his keeping; most sedulous, lest the salt lose its savour, for if it do, wherewith shall *it* be salted? The unclean spirit has gone out of him;—let him see to it that he return not again with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and so the last end of that man be worse than the first.

IV.—EDUCATION OUGHT TO BE CONDUCTED WITH REFERENCE TO BAPTISM.

HITHERTO we have been viewing the practical duties resulting from baptism, by whomsoever received, by an adult in full knowledge of what he is doing, as well as by an unconscious infant. But now we must turn to thoughts connected with the latter, which are practical ones for so many of the members of our Church.

What comfort then,—what gladness of heart—what boldness of purpose, ought the thought of baptismal regeneration to give to parents, to sponsors, to all who are entrusted with the Christian young! Parents bring helpless infants into this world of mortality—they communicate to them their own heritage of sin and woe,—they impart to them a nativity from the first Adam, a nativity of the earth, earthly, burdened with guilt and death. But scarcely have they done this, before Divine mercy puts it into

their power to counteract all its evils. Through them their helpless infant is born into a world of mortality; but by bringing him to Christ, he is straightway born again into an immortal life and a heavenly inheritance; for the nativity from the first Adam, which is all that parents can impart, there is now a nativity from the second, even the new Adam of Life and Righteousness. And these things being so, with what thoughts ought we not to regard a baptized infant! The sight of a baby, in helplessness and mystery, fills even the natural man with yearnings of tenderness, mingled with awe,—with a reverence in which even the brute creation is made somewhat to sympathize. But oh! how enhanced is all this by the considerations on which we have been dwelling! That helpless infant is now indeed an object of reverence, for he is unutterably consecrated—he has become a member of Him, who, as he once contracted His own immensity into the same narrow limits of human infancy, can well make another infant one of His brethren; and impart to him the germ of His likeness and His glory.

And warranted as we are in thoughts like these, how carefully should we pursue the work of education in the light of them! With what religious oversight ought we not to watch over the first dawnings of reason, affection, and will! What a sanctity may we not impart even to those first trainings, by which, in the absence of all other, we seek to surround and so imbue our charge with gentleness, refinement, delicacy, courtesy, and love! How sedulously should we cultivate the growing sense of those relationships to ourselves which we shall so soon be called to use as types of His very highest and holiest ones!

And when that time arrives, how careful must we be to teach him to say, “Our Father who art in Heaven” with meaning to the words,—to believe that those words do indeed express a mighty reality—a reality as regards him,—to have recourse at all times to his heavenly Father,—to feel assured that he is individually the object of that Father’s love, and that, young as his, he is to fill with the free filial instinct of a son! How early shall we not begin to teach him that he is not his own, and to apply to him that consideration for avoiding sin on which an Apostle has laid such stress, the calling his baptism to mind!

The place to which I refer is 2 Peter i. 9, where the Apostle traces the want of Christian graces in any member of the Church to a forgetfulness of his baptismal regeneration. He says, "he that lacketh these things" (the graces St. Peter had just been enforcing) "is blind and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that *he was purged from his old sins.*" And if this rule of recollecting the purification of baptism be thus effectual as a safeguard to adults, how successful may we not hope to find it in children, who, with whatever tendencies to, have not any confirmed habit of, sinning; whose minds are so flexible and so open to impressions, and who cannot yet have hardened their hearts!

Therefore, let parents, sponsors, guardians, teachers, and pastors, see that they educate from, and with constant recurrence to, baptism. I am sure that religious education, if duly accompanied with prayer to God, will be found far more effectual on this principle, than it has ever been on any other. The children of religious parents will, for the most part, cease to present us with the painful spectacle so general now—that of diversity from their parents, constraint in their presence, unreality, and a faint barrier of early prejudice yielding no resistance so soon as the enemy comes in like a flood.

Beautiful indeed and joyful may a christian education become, when baptismal benefit is freely appealed to and employed. We shall then find that we have powers on our side greater than can be brought against us. We may then count on willing learners. Religion will cease to seem the strange and alien thing to children that it too often does at present. They will no longer look on it as an unknown process to which the hearts of a few grown-up people around them have been subjected, and one or two rare children of their own age, of whom they read in memoirs, only to feel how utterly unlike it all is to any thing in themselves. They will join prayer, in the services of the Church, in listening to religious truth in the spirit prescribed by the beginning of their Catechisms, *i. e.* they will do so as approaching something which nearly concerns themselves, in which they themselves have a portion and a birthright. They will listen as learning the truth about themselves—learning who they are and Whose they are—what

has been, and what, if they ask it, will be, done for them—what they have been made, and what it is in their power to become—what they possess now, and what they may hope to enjoy hereafter; to Whom they have been united in the meantime, and what will be the glorious issue of that union, if they seek and employ the grace which will keep it undissolved.

The following beautiful poems, by living authors, may help both to illustrate and recommend the views I have been trying to exhibit:—

TO —,

ON THE MORNING OF HER BAPTISM.

THIS will we name thy better birth-day, child,
O born already to a sin-worn world,
But now unto a kingdom undefiled,
Where over thee love's banner is unfurled.

Lo ! on the morning of this Sabbath day
I lay aside the weight of human fears,
Which I had for thee, and without dismay,
Look through the avenue of coming years.

I see thee passing, without mortal harm,
Through ranks of foes against thy safety met ;
I see thee passing—thy defence and charm
The seal of God upon thy forehead set.

From this time forth thou often shalt hear say
Of what immortal City thou wert given
The rights and full immunities to-day,
And of the hope laid up for thee in heaven.

From this time forward thou shalt not believe
That thou art earthly, or that aught of earth,
Or aught that hell can threaten, shall receive
Power on the children of the second birth.

O, risen out of death into the day
Of an immortal life, we bid thee hail,
And will not kiss the waterdrops away,
The dew that rests upon thy forehead pale.

And if the seed of better life lie long,
As in a wintry hiddenness and death;
Then, calling back this day, we will be strong
To wait in hope for heaven's reviving breath;

To water, if there should be such sad need,
The undiscerned germ with sorrowing tears;
To wait until from that undying seed
Out of the earth a heavenly plant appears;

The growth and produce of a fairer land,
And thence transplanted to a barren soil,
It needs the tendance of a careful hand,
Of love, that is not weary with long toil.

And thou, dear child, whose very helplessness
Is as a bond upon us, and a claim,
Mkest thou have this of us, as we no less
Have daily from our Father known the same.

R. C. TRENCHE.

TO MY GOD-CHILD

ON THE DAY OF IS BAPTISM.

No harsh transitions Nature knows,
No dreary spaces intervene ;
Her work in silence forward goes,
And rather felt than seen.

For where the watcher, that with eye
Turned eastward, yet could ever say
When the faint glooming in the sky
First lightened into day ?

Or maiden, by an opening flower
That many a summer morn has stood,
Could fix upon the very hour
It ceased to be a bud ?

The rainbow colours mix and blend
Each with the other, until none
Can tell where fainter hues had end,
And deeper tints begun.

But only doth this much appear—
That the pale hues are deeper grown ;
The day has broken bright and clear ;
The bud is fully blown.

Dear child, and happy shalt thou be,
If from this hour, with just increase
All good things shall grow up in thee,
By such unmarked degrees.

If there shall be no dreary space
Between thy present self and past,
No dreary miserable space
With spectral shapes aghast ;

But the full graces of thy prime
Shall, in their weak beginnings, be
Lost in an unremembered time
Of holy infancy.

This blessing is the first and best ;
Yet has not prayer been made in vain
For them, though not so amply blest,
The lost and found again.

And shouldest thou, alas ! forbear
To choose the better, nobler lot,
Yet may we not esteem our prayer
Unheard or heeded not ;

If after many a wandering,
And many a devious pathway trod ;

If, having known that bitter thing,
 'To leave the Lord thy God,
 It yet shall be, that thou at last,
 Although thy noon be lost, return
 To bind life's eve in union fast
 To this, its blessed morn.

R. C. TRENCH

WHERE is it mothers learn their love ?
 In every Church a Fountain springs
 On which the Eternal Dove
 Hovers on softest wings.

What sparkles in that lucid flood
 Is water, by gross mortals eyed,
 But, seen by Faith, 'tis blood,
 Out of a dear Friend's side.

A few calm words of faith and prayer,
 A few bright drops of holy dew,
 Shall work a wonder there
 Earth's charmers never knew.

Oh ! happy arms, where cradled lies,
 And ready for the Lord's embrace,
 That precious sacrifice
 The darling of his grace.

Blessed eyes that see the smiling gleam
 Upon the slumbering features glow,
 When the life-giving stream
 Touches the tender brow :

Or, when the Holy Cross is signed,
 And the young soldier duly sworn,
 With true and fearless mind
 To serve the Virgin Born.

But happiest ye, who sealed and blessed,
 Back to your arms your treasure take,
 With Jesus' mark impressed,
 To nurse for Jesus' sake.

To whom, as if in hallowed air,
 He knelt before some awful shrine,
 His innocent gestures wear
 A meaning half divine.

To whom Love's daily touch is seen
 In strengthening form and freshening hue,
 In the fixed brow serene
 The deep yet eager view.

Who taught thy pure and even breath
 To come and go with such sweet grace ?
 Whence thy reposing faith
 Though in our frail embrace ?

O, tender gem, and full of heaven !
 Not in the twilight stars on high,
 Not in moist flowers at even,
 See we our God so nigh.

Sweet one make haste and know Him too,
 Thine own adopting Father love,
 That like thine earliest dew
 Thy dying sweets may prove.

CHRISTIAN YEAR

FINIS



No. 180

REASONS

For Daily Service.

BECAUSE Daily Worship is due to God, not only from private persons and private families, but from the Church.

2. Because the daily prayers of private persons and families are not the act of the Church, but the act of private men and their households.

3. Because no Daily Worship is the act of the Church as such, except Public Daily Worship, according to the order of the Church.

4. Because from the beginning Daily Public Worship ever has been believed, and still is believed, to be an integral part of the Worship of God ; as among the Jews, who of old observed it by God's express ordinance, and do so still ; as also in every branch of the Holy Catholic Church under heaven, except only where it has been dropped in the last hundred and fifty or two hundred years. It has been continued in the Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and College Chapels, and in some parish Churches in England ; and in others, both in that country and this, it has been revived : which testifies to this rule of the Church ; and even among Mahometans, who worship God in their mosques every day.

5. Because the Daily Service of the Church is as the family prayer of a parish, of which the Priest is the spiritual father.

6. Because it affords a daily opportunity for the old, for widows, for young and unemployed persons, for the rich, and for those whose time is at their disposal, to worship God in his Church.

7. Because it affords an opportunity for any who are burdened with any particular and casual sin, to come and confess it ; or who have received any mercy to come and offer thanks for it, which acts are typified by the sin-offerings and thank-offerings which, under the Law, were offered daily by private persons in the Temple.

8. Because it gives opportunity for the ignorant, and those that cannot read God's word, to come and hear it : The Psalms being recited once a month, and the Old Testament read over

once, and the New three times (with very slight exceptions) every year.

9. Because it is a wholesome admonition and discipline for the rich and great of this world, and a daily corrective of their peculiar dangers and temptations.

10. Because it directly deepens and extends the sense of our obligation to worship God, on the Sundays and Feasts and Fasts of the Church.

11. Because many more people are able to come every day than at present imagined, it having hitherto been their habit to form their worldly plans and engagements first, without a thought of the order of the Church, or of the worship of God. Daily Service would reverse this evil and culpable practice, and make the homage due to God and the order of the Church the first fixed point in every man's time and thoughts.

12. Because if any are hindered coming themselves, they may send some of their family. One of a house may come as a representative and intercessor for the rest; and even they that stay at home may, when they hear the bell, or see the time come, kneel down and say the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Collect of the day, and the Apostolical Benediction, which is not more a benediction than a prayer suitable for all.

13. Because Daily Service would make the Clergy to be in truth what they are by office, the Priests of the Lord's temple; and openly men of prayer, and devotion.

14. Because it would serve as a light but very wholesome spiritual discipline, giving fixedness and order to their whole day; checking needless absence and unprofitable engagements, and teaching them the value of time in a life consecrated to God, and the precedence which is due to all things which pertain to God's honour.

15. Because it would, more than all other things, form, especially in the Clergy, a serious, staid, reverent, and devout habit of mind, and make their life to be a life of prayer.

16. Because to worship God daily in the Church, can hinder no man's good, and may bring, unawares, blessings above what any man can either ask or think.

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THE
MEANING
OF THE WORD
BAPTISM.



NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY



MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM.

All agree that this word refers to some use of water, but beyond this, there is a division of opinion, whether its true sense be immersion only, or whether it also may be correctly translated affusion and sprinkling.

The Greek words upon which the discussion turns, are "*baptizo*," and "*baptismos*," from which our English words baptise and baptism are formed. To settle their meaning, an appeal is now made to the Bible. If we find either, or both of these Greek words there used, in such connections as *clearly* admit of application of water to a part of the body only, then it will not do to say, that baptism can only be performed by an immersion of the whole body: if we find either or both, used in such connections as shew that affusion or sprinkling was referred to by the divine writers, still more is that assertion contrary to holy writ.

St. Paul tells us, Heb. ix. 10, that under the Jewish law were "diverse baptisms," for so it is in the original. Can there be diverse immersions? There may be immersions of diverse things, or for divers purpose. But the Apostle does not say so; and the only way of learning any man's opinion, is to take him as he writes or speaks, not as we think he should have spoken or written—take his words, and neither add to nor subtract from them. If we do this, we cannot translate the above text, diverse immersions. In St. Luke, xi. 38, we are informed, a certain Pharisee "marvelled that he (Christ) had not been baptised before dinner," for so it is in Greek. That is if the opinion here opposed be correct, the marvel was that he had not been immersed before dinner—that is that his whole body had not been plunged into water, for the assertion is, that nothing else is hap-

tism. Let us see how that Pharisaic custom is explained by another Evangelist, St. Matthew xv. 2, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders, for they eat bread with unwashen hands?" The same explanation is given in St. Mark, vii. 3, 5. Then comparing these two passages, washing the hands, according to the Scriptures is baptism. Is it in view of those here opposed? Even if the hands were immersed in water, it would fall far short of their view—for with them baptism can only be done by plunging the whole body into water—here nothing more can be made of it than the plunging of a small part of the body. And if application of water to one part of the body be baptism, the notion here opposed falls. But any acquainted with Jewish customs, know that their mode of washing the hands was by pouring water upon them. So well established was this custom, that "he who poureth water upon the hands of another," was used to express the office of a servant—as synonymous with servant: see 2d Kings, iii, 11. Then plainly affusion is baptism—if on one part, why not on another? Again, in the first Corinthians, x, 2, it is written that the Jews "were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." From Ex. xiv., we learn that before they crossed over from Egypt—or even the river was divided for their passage—the cloud passed from before and went behind them. Then verses 21 and 22, "Moses stretched out his hand over the sea ** and the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground." Was there any immersion here? They were not enclosed between the cloud and the walls made by the sea—for the cloud neither passed over them, nor rested on them, during this passage. So far is no evidence that their baptism was by immersion, but proof to the contrary.

But Ps. 77th, 15 to 20, which refers to this passage from Egypt, shews us that during the passage the clouds "poured out water." Was this baptism then, by immersion or affusion?

St. Mark, vii, 4, "And many other things there be which they (the Pharisees and all the Jews) have received to hold as the baptisms (for so it is in the Greek) of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and tables." And as shewn in the margin of our larger

Bibles, the word translated tables, means couches ; this is the exact rendering of the Greek. Would it not require strong evidence to induce us to believe that upon each occasion of ceremonial purification their *couches* were plunged into water ? However this may appear to any one from Nu. xix. 18, we know that the mode appointed in the law for cleansing household furnitures was by sprinkling. In the same way was a house, tainted by leprosy, cleansed, not by washing its walls, but by sprinkling upon them. Lev. xiv. 51. Sprinkling them is baptism.

Our blessed Lord was to baptise with the Holy Ghost. The outward sign of this inward gift to the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, was (Acts ii. 3) cloven tongues, as of fire, sitting on them. And the baptism of the Holy Ghost, throughout the New Testament, is expressed by affusion, or pouring. Christians are baptised with the Holy Ghost—are we “immersed into the Holy Ghost,” as some say, or is his holy influence poured upon us ? In the xi. of the Acts, St. Peter, giving an account of his conduct in the case of Cornelius, appeals to the outward manifestation of God’s acceptance of that Gentile and his friend : and says, verses, 15, 16, “The Holy Ghost *fell* on them as on us at the beginning ; then remembered I the words of the Lord how he said, John indeed baptises with water, but ye shall be *baptised* with the Holy Ghost. Here the falling on, or affusion of the Holy Ghost, is called baptism. Would there not be a contradiction in his words, if immersion were the only baptism, thus, the Holy Ghost *fell* on them, then remembered I the words, ye shall be immersed into the Holy Ghost ?

“*Bapto*” is the root of the more common Ecclesiastical word “*baptizo*. ” In all languages, the natural signification is more closely followed in the root word than in the derivative word. Let us see whether of this word “*hapto*, ” immersion is the only interpretation, whether it be not used where that sense *cannot* be put upon it. We have a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, into the Greek, made before the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn, by some Jews ; which translation was so common in Judea, that most of the quotations by our Lord and his Apostles, are from it. Dan. iv. 33.—Nebucaduezar, in the degradation inflicted

for his pride, was made to eat grass like an ox, and was wet with the dew of heaven. The Greek word for wet is one of the tenses of “*bapto*.”—Though one be most thoroughly wet with dew, he is immersed, but not sprinkled.

More need not be said to shew that the sense of the word “*baptizo*” is not definite, that it refers to any application of water. And I will add, that no place can be adduced from the New Testament, in which immersion is the only sense that will agree with the context.

One passage more and I leave the word. The Apocrypha books were written in Greek, before the time of Christ’s earthly sojourn, by Jews acquainted with that language. And although they be not a canonical part of the Old Testament, they are good authority for deciding the meaning of a Greek word. Eccle. xxxiv. 25, it is written “He that washeth himself (in the Greek he that is baptised) after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing.” Here the mode of applying water prescribed by the law for ceremonial cleansing after touching a dead body, is baptism. Nu. xix 13, 16, 18, shews that it was applied by sprinkling. This, 19th chapter, gives an instance of the diverse baptism spoken of by St. Paul, Heb. ix. 10. The verses referred to above, with the 19th, shew that the person who had touched a carcass, was baptised by sprinkling; and also that the clean person, who had thus baptised him, was himself baptised by bathing.

But we are told that the baptism practised by the Apostles was by immersion, and therefore those departing from that custom do not baptise. This assertion shall be attended to. But even if such was their custom, if the Word, as has been shewn has the indeterminate meaning, and is correctly rendered in some places by sprinkling and affusion, and will in them bear no other meaning, though at other times it does mean immersion, then we may choose any of its senses, unless we are commanded to confine ourselves to one, which we are not. To give a parallel instance. All know that the Apostles received the holy Eucharist, reclining upon couches; yet who will deny that it may be received in another posture, as sitting, standing, or kneeling. But if they did not

MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM.

receive, reclining, as some will deny any thing, they received it in some one posture, does that make the receiving in any other, null?

But to return to the assertion that the baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, were performed by immersion. This is based upon the phrases in our translation, went down into, and came up out of the water. Now we are to notice that neither the going down into, nor coming up out of the water, were baptism—that was something distinct from both, and was done between the two—and these phrases do not settle how that intermediate act was performed, whether by immersion, affusion or sprinkling.

But these phrases should not be built upon by one acquainted with the Greek. The prepositions so translated are “*ex, apo, eis, en.*” To prove that “*ex*” does not necessarily mean out of, I will quote some passages from the New Testament, giving the original Word instead of the translation, that each one may judge how it should be translated.

St. John, vi. 23, “Other ships came ‘*ex*’ Tiberias.” Do ships come out of, or from a city. Romans, xi. 11, We are not justified “‘*ex*’ works,” is it out of, or from works, or by? Heb. xiii. 10, “We have an altar, ‘*ex*’ which they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.” Do we eat out of, or from an altar? Rev. ii. 7, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat ‘*ex*’ the tree of life.” Do we eat out of, or from a tree? Other instances might be given, but these passages shew, that this word, when standing between person and river, does not shew that the person came out of the river; its full sense is given in the phrase, he came from the river.

1 Cor. xv. 52, “‘*en*’ a moment, ‘*en*’ the twinkling of an eye, ‘*en*’ the last trump,” does not the particle “*en*” in this single passage mean in and at? The phrase “wherewith” in St. Mat. v. 13, is literally, “*en*” what; does it mean in what, or with what? So “with what,” St. Mat. vii. 2, is “*en*” what, and the same question is asked. Romans, x. 9, “If those shalt confess ‘*en*’ thy mouth.” Is it in, or with thy mouth? Ro. xvi, 16, “Salute one another ‘*en*’ a holy kiss.” Is it in, or with a kiss? Here again many other passages might be given, but are not the above sufficient to shew that it will not do, because of the use of this word,

to say men must be baptised in, instead of with water.

“*Apo*” is another word connected with this subject. Let us see how it is used in some passages. St. Matthew xxvii. 51, “The veil of the temple was rent in twain ‘*apo*’ the top to the bottom.” Is it out of the top, or from the top? Heb. viii. 11, “All shall know me ‘*apo*’ the least to the greatest.” Is it out of or from the least? St. John, xxvi. 8, “They were not far ‘*apo*’ the land.” Out of, or from the land? Plainly it will not answer, to found an opinion upon this word, that persons always came out of the water after baptism.

“*Eis*” is the last word necessary to mention as connected with this subject. “They sailed ‘*eis*’ Cyprus.”—Act xiii. 4. Does a ship sail into a city, or stop at the city? In other words, does it not sail to it? St. Mat. xxi. 1. Bethpage was not far from Jerusalem, but still a distinct village. Yet in this passage it is said, they came to Bethpage, “*eis*” Jerusalem. Is not near to, the full force of the words here? St. Luke, vi. 20, Christ is said to have “lifted his eyes ‘*eis*’ his disciples.” Does not towards express its full force? St. Luke, xi, 49, “I will send ‘*eis*’ them prophets.” Does not to, express the entire meaning? St. John, iv. 6, The well mentioned was not in Samaria, but only near to that city, see verse 8. Yet it is said in the 5th verse, Christ came “*eis*” the city. Does it not mean near, in this place? St. John, xi. 38, it is written Christ “cometh ‘*eis*’ the grave.” Did he go into it? Clearly it will not do to say this word must be rendered into.

It must be plain that the force of these words is expressed by with, to, in or at, and any argument founded upon them in favor of immersion, falls to the ground. And, before, it was shewn that baptism is correctly translated by affusion, immersion, or sprinkling. Any, who have followed this argument, will see that there is no foundation for the assertion that immersion is the only mode of baptism, or even, the most correct one.



No 124.

A

CHURCHMAN'S ANSWER

* TO THE

QUESTION

"WHY DO I TAKE MY CHILD TO BE BAPTIZED?"

BECAUSE I am instructed to do so by that branch of Christ's Church, called the Protestant Episcopal Church, of which I am a member; that Church having in its Twenty-seventh Article declared its deliberate opinion, that "the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

Because I learn that there is not in the whole Christian world any congregation of Christians, whose children are not baptized in infancy, the Baptists and Quakers excepted.

Because the opinion of two sects, which have not openly existed three centuries, is of no weight, when set against the universal practice of the Christian world, in all the preceding centuries.

Because the practice of baptizing infants did not take its rise in a dark and barbarous age, but is known to have existed many ages before the corruption of religion by the Popes and Court of Rome.

Because, within sixty years after the death of St. John the Evangelist, I find it recorded,* that there were persons then sixty or seventy years of age, who had from infancy been disciples of Christ; and having been made disciples in infancy, I conclude they must have been baptized in infancy, in obedience to our Lord's command, "Go ye and teach (or make disciples,) baptizing them," &c. *Matt. xxviii. 19.*

* By Justin Martyr, who addressed his Defence of the Christian Religion to the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, A. D. 140, and who suffered martyrdom, A. D. 165.

Because a Christian Bishop and writer on the doctrine of the Church,* thirty years later than the time last mentioned, speaks of "Infants as by Christ born again unto God," an expression which implies that infants were in his time baptized; for, according to that writer's way of speaking, to be regenerate, or born again, is the same thing as to be baptized.

Because another Christian Minister and writer,† whose father and grandfather were Christians, and who was himself born only eighty-five years after the death of St. John, speaks of infant baptism as then practised, and says that the custom was *established by the Apostles*.

Because, in the fifth century, when disputes took place about the nature of Original sin, the Church held‡ that Original sin rendered it necessary that infants should be baptized, while even the Pelagians did not venture to deny the fitness of the practice.

Because a writer§ of that period declared it to be his opinion, that the baptism of infants had been established by Divine authority, since he found that the whole Church practised it, that it was not first instituted by any council, but had always been retained, and therefore must be believed to have been delivered to the Church by the Apostles.

Because, though I find many early traces of young persons baptized in infancy being brought to the Bishop to receive Confirmation, I find no trace whatever of any general custom of bringing the children of Christians to be baptized, when grown up.

Because, when I inquire how far the ancient and present practice of the Church agrees with the Scriptures, I find no one passage of Scripture which, directly or otherwise, forbids baptizing infants.

Because I understand our Saviour's words, Go, and teach (or make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a command to baptize every person admitted as a disciple into his Church; and because I think our Saviour's words, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," to be a direction to the Church to admit children into the number of the disciples.

Because I understand our Saviour's words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," as a declaration of the rewards and penalties attached to the acceptance or rejection of the Gospel; and that they are unfairly interpreted to exclude infants from baptism on account of want of faith: for if the authority of this text excludes them from baptism, for want of faith, by the same authority they are exclu-

* Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 180.

† Origen. He was born at Alexandria, A. D. 186, and died about A. D. 254.

‡ In the Council of Bishops at Carthage, A. D. 418.

§ St. Austin, the chief opponent of Pelagius's opinions on Original sin.

ded from heaven, whether baptized or not, since “he that believeth not shall be damned;” an interpretation which will scarcely be contended for by any party.

Because, though there is no precept which, in so many words, orders the baptism of infants, yet the declaration of our Saviour, “Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” (John iii. 5.) is quite general, and there is nothing in any other part of the Scripture to limit it.

Because infants, as well as others, *must* be born again, and there is no other way of the new birth but by *water* and the Spirit.

Because there is nothing unreasonable in the belief that God, who “first loved us,” may confer spiritual benefits on his creatures before they are of an age to do him spiritual service.

Because the circumstance of children being admitted into a covenant with God by circumcision, under the Law, proves that there is nothing in the nature of children, which unfits them from being admitted into covenant with Him; and it is unreasonable to think that children had greater privileges under the Law, than they now have under the Gospel.

Because, since it is clear that infants are capable of admission to the bliss of heaven, there can be no reason why they should not be capable of being admitted into the Church. For, if they can go to heaven without faith, why not to the font? Why should the conditions of their being baptized be harder than the conditions of their being saved?

Because, since infants are under the curse of Adam before they can commit actual sin, it is reasonable to believe that they may be admitted to the blessings and privileges of redemption before they can exercise faith and obedience.

Because, as Christ required faith in those who came to him in behalf of others, who required healing, and allowed their faith to benefit the sufferer, even so it may be presumed that Christ may be satisfied with the faith of those who appear before him to solicit the grace of baptism for their children.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

“*Why am I content that my child should be sprinkled with water, and not wholly dipped in it?*”

Because I consider that the validity of baptism does not depend upon the quantity of water used, or the manner in which it is applied.

Because the word *baptism* (as used by the Evangelists) means rather a washing with water, than the dipping in water of the whole body.

Because I read of many thousands of persons baptized under circumstances which render it almost impossible that they should have been all dipped in water. *Acts ii. 41.*

Because I read of persons, a whole household, baptized in the middle of the night, and in a prison, where they could hardly have had the means of being dipped. *Acts xvi. 33.*

Because in our climate young children would be very frequently injured in health by a total immersion, especially when sick.

Because the Church in early ages suited the quantity of water to the circumstances of the individual; many cases being met with of persons baptized on a sick bed.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,

"Why do I take Godfathers and Godmothers to answer for my child?"

Because, in a case where the piety of the Church has followed a custom known to have existed ever since the third century, I should consider it presumptuous to call its judgment in question, except upon the strongest grounds.

Because no practice seems to be more proper than that every child, when unable to answer for himself, should answer by persons pledged to instruct him in his duty; and no purpose can be more pious than the providing for my child, when baptized, some person to remind him of the duties which his baptism lays upon him.

Because I take comfort from this, that if I myself, being a parent, were to die, my child will not be without religious instruction; and if I live, and am negligent, there will be those who are bound to remind me of my duty.

Because the appointment of godfathers and godmothers has a manifest tendency to promote the bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to prevent the sacrament of baptism from falling into contempt through the irreverent administration of it, or the ungodly lives of those who have been baptized.

Because, although godfathers may not always do their duty, that is their fault, and not any fault of the Church which appoints them.

NEW YORK :

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A

CONFERENCE

BETWEEN TWO MEN THAT HAD DOUBTS

ABOUT

INFANT BAPTISM.

BY THE

REV. W. WALL,

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM, AND LATE
OF SHOREHAM IN KENT.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY

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A

CONFERENCE
 BETWEEN TWO MEN THAT HAD DOUBTS
 ABOUT
INFANT BAPTISM,
 BY THE
 REV. W. WALL.

P. I AM sorry to hear, that since I left your country, your neighbour *John N.* has forsaken the Church, and is turned an *Anabaptist*. I took him for a very honest man: and he was a constant keeper of the Church and communion, and very studious in the Scriptures.

A. He is so: a very honest man. And for his forsaking the Church I am as sorry as you; and I and some others have had conferences with him on that subject; and he has studied the point so well, that he has some regret of conscience for the sin of schism, and will, I believe, return to the communion of the Church, provided he may be admitted holding that opinion. But for his opinion against Infant Baptism, I cannot be sorry, for I am of that opinion myself.

P. I crave your pardon: it is more than I knew. You were not accounted of that opinion in my time: and I remember that your children were christened.

A. I was not then of that opinion so absolutely as I am now. But I had even then doubts of the lawfulness of Infant Baptism: which have so far increased since, that they have turned the scale with me. And I intend, God willing, to advise my children (when they are capable) to receive baptism in the due way, and to receive it so myself; and had before this time, but that I find some difficulty in getting one to baptize me.

P. I thought they had been very forward to do that office to any one that is of their opinion.

A. Yes: to one that is of their opinion in all things: But I, though of their opinion for Adult Baptism, yet have, I thank God, been made thoroughly sensible of the sin of division, separation, and renouncing communion with an Apostolic Church, though

holding some errors, provided they be not such as do evert the foundation of Christian faith; and therefore am desirous to continue in communion; and they do not much care for baptizing such an one. And indeed I was not very inclinable to receive it at their hands, because of their schism; but had rather have received it from some minister of the Church, of whose ordination to the ministry I am much better satisfied, but I find that cannot be obtained.

P. Will not the minister of the Church baptize you by dipping if desired?

A. Yes, very willingly, and the rubrick prescribes it in the first place: if the person be willing to venture his health, which I am very willing to do; being satisfied that going into the water has more of fright than hurt in it. But they will refuse it to me, because they reckon my baptism received in infancy, to be a baptism rightly administered; and, consequently, that the baptizing me now would be proper *Anabaptism*: which both sides hold to be an unfitting thing. I know those that have asked them, and they would not give it them: and indeed by their principle cannot. So that it were better for me, if I had had antipædobaptist parents; for then the ministers would willingly have baptized me now.

P. What do you think to do in this case?

A. I hear that there are in some parts of this country Antipædobaptists that are more for a general communion of all saints; and that do either continue in the communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church themselves, or at least will baptize a man that does: and that do not require, that when one renounces the devil and wickedness, one must also renounce all the Catholic Church except themselves. And I think to find out some such men; for I would willingly so receive my baptism, as to keep my old creed, and own the *Catholic Church*, and the *communion of Saints*; and be baptized into the *Christian Church*, as such, and not into any particular sect. I want such a man as Mr. *Tombs* was.

P. I do the more heartily pity your case, because I have had great doubts about Infant Baptism myself, and continued under them for some years, and during all that time felt great perplexity of conscience. And I indeed was like to fall away further than you are like to do; for I should have gone totally over to them, and should not only have forsaken the Church, but should have been probably by this time a great hater of it, and railed against it, as many of them do. For, as for the way that you take, it would not have come into my mind: it is, you know, more spoken against than either of the others. You will be called a Jack on both sides, a halter between two opinions.

A. I do not halt between two opinions; but do, by a persuasion that is now firmly settled, hold these two things: 1st. That the doctrine of Infant Baptism is an error. 2^{dly}. That one is not to separate from a Church merely for some error held, or erroneous practice used by them; provided this error be not such as

does *evert* the foundation. And this is owned in the *confession of faith of one hundred Churches of Antipædobaptists*, printed at London, 1699. And it appears also by plain consequences from what they there say, that they themselves do not take this error to be such.

P. What ! do those hundred Churches live then in communion with the Church? or do they separate from it, as all the Antipædobaptists about us, you see, do?

A. That I do not know. But by their own principles they ought to hold communion, if the Church would admit them.

P. What do you do when, in the time of public service, an infant is baptized? You cannot join in those prayers.

A. Not in all of them. That God would bless the infant, and that (in case he live to maturity) God would make him a good man, I pray with the rest. To the other prayers in that form of baptizing I give no *amen*.

P. By this rule, not only the *Antipædobaptists*, but much more the *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, &c. ought to come to Church, though they hold their particular opinions. And by the same rule, put the case that the Church should declare for your opinion of antipædobaptism, and establish it by vote in Convention, I and others that believe Infant Baptism to be the right way, ought not, even in that case, to forsake her communion; but only getting our own children baptized, ought in other things to hold communion.

A. I do conceive it clear from Scripture, that both these your consequences are true; provided you and they may be admitted without declaring any assent and consent contrary to your own opinions. And the Church does not require any such assent and consent in order to lay communion. And it is plain also from Scripture, that such communion ought to be constant; and that the man so joining ought to *avoid all that cause divisions*, Rom. xvi. 17, (that is, renounce communion with them,) though those dividers may hold opinions which he thinks to be truer in some particular matters. And in a word, that all Christians in the world, that hold the same fundamentals, ought to make one Church, though differing in lesser opinions; and that the *sin*, the mischief, and danger to the souls of men, that divide into those many sects and parties among us, do (for the most of them) consist not so much in the opinions themselves, as in their dividing and separating for them.

P. This way of yours, if practicable, would cure at once God knows how many mischiefs. But you see the world is not of your sentiment: for as soon as they fall into any particular opinion in religion, they set up a separate Church for it.

A. Not all the world. It is only in a few places where this humour does so generally prevail. In other parts of Christendom they (though holding different opinions, yet) do account schism from them a great wickedness and a great mischief. And to show you they are in the right in thinking so, I will (because you seem

not to have considered this matter so well as some others) refer you to some plain places of Scripture, which if you please now to peruse, I will be silent the while. See what our Saviour himself says, *John* x. 16, and xvii. 11; and what the primitive Christians practised, *Acts* ii. 46, and iv. 32; and what St. *Paul* says, 1 *Cor.* i. 10, 11, 12, and 2, 3, 4; also the whole twelfth chapter: *Eph.* ii. 18, &c. to the end. Where the Jewish and Gentile Christians are showed to be *one body, one household, one temple fitly framed together*: and yet these were of different opinions in several matters. Likewise chap. iii. 6; iv. 1 to 13; *Phil.* ii. 1, 2; where he uses the most solemn adjurations to this purpose. But I would more especially recommend to you the reading of *Gal.* v. 20, 21; *Phil.* iii. 15, 16; the fourteenth chapter to the *Romans*, and part of the fifteenth, to *verse* 7, and also *Rom.* xv. 17. Have you read them?

P. Yes, I have: and I thank you for directing me to them. For though there is none of them but what I have read before, yet I had not minded how fully applicable they are to this purpose.

A. Are they not plain, full, and earnest? Do you find any of the controverted points to be determined by Scripture in words nigh so plain or pathetic? Whatever disputes be raised, whether such or such a point be a fundamental, there can be no doubt but this is one of the most fundamental of all. You see in that of *Gal.* v. where St. *Paul* gives a roll or catalogue of such sins as shall certainly exclude men from heaven, that he reckons *seditions and heresies* among them. And those are the words by which he commonly denotes parties, factions, divisions, and schisms in the Church; as appears by comparing 1 *Cor.* xi. 18, 19, and several other places.

P. I observe some of these places to require that we should be *like-minded, of the same mind, mind the same things, &c.* Do not these mean that we must be all of one opinion: which is the thing we find to be impossible?

A. I have read a book of Bishop *Stillingfleet's*, called the *Unreasonableness of Separation*; which shews that the original words in those places do signify no other than what we say in English, *Unanimous*. And men may be unanimous in the joint worship of God, though they be not of the same mind in all disputable things. And he also plainly shows there, that that command of St. *Paul*, *Phil.* iii. 15, 16, is to be applied so, namely, that if we differ about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of some particular practices, it is to be hoped that God will in time bring us to a right and uniform understanding of them; but that in the mean time we should, in the things *whereunto we have attained*, or wherein we have agreed, worship God with a joint rule of worship. But this is more fully and plainly commanded by St. *Paul* in that other place, *Rom.* chap. xiv. and xv. to *verse* 8, where, giving rules to those that differed in opinions, he orders them not to judge or despise one another for them; but to *receive one another*; meaning to Christian communion and brotherhood, as the scope of the place shows.

P. That place is indeed full to this purpose. And the command he gives with such earnestness, *Rom. xvi. 17, to avoid those that cause divisions*, is a plain proof that we ought not only to beware that we do not ourselves make any division, but also to avoid those that do. But some say baptism is a fundamental; and therefore that they that differ about it cannot be of one communion.

A. That baptism is a fundamental, I am inclined to be of their opinion: it is so plainly commanded in Scripture and so much stress laid on it; which makes me amazed at the *Quakers*, and some of the *Socinians*, that call themselves Christians, while they reject it. But the parties we speak of do both of them own baptism: they differ only about the age or manner of receiving it.

P. Well. Upon the whole matter, I am sensible what thanks I owe to God for restraining me from the error of Antipædobaptism, which would in my case have been attended with the sin of schism; which is, I see, ten times worse than the error itself.

A. I shall be obliged to you, if you will let me know the grounds upon which you overcame the inclination to that which you call *an error*, but I think is the *truth*: for you say you were once inclined to it. Were it not that you seem a serious man, I should be afraid that you overcame it as people use to overcome any good motion of conscience, namely, by stifling the conviction you had.

P. Not so: but I had certainly yielded myself up to it, if I had not consulted some of more understanding than myself, and particularly Mr. B., the minister of the parish I live in. And I would crave leave to ask you, whether you have taken the same course; that is, whether you did propose to him that has the care of your soul, or some other minister, your doubts about your baptism received in infancy, before you came to this resolution of renouncing it?

A. I confess I have not.

P. How then can you acquit this course of yours from being rash and precipitate, in a matter of so great moment? Those men who, having doubts concerning any practice, or any doctrine received in the Church, do use all means that are in their power for clearing of the truth; if they be yet at last mistaken in judging; and the error do, after their best endeavors for information, appear to them to be the truth, will, as we have reason to hope, obtain an easy pardon of God for their mistake. But it seems plainly to be a sin of presumption in any of us to alter, on our own heads, a practice so universally received in Christ's church, without so much as consulting those that are *over us in the Lord*, to see whether they can give any satisfaction to our objections. You would not do so with a title of land conveyed to you in your infancy: if you thought you had discovered any flaw in your old title, you would consult a lawyer before you threw it up to seek for a new one. If I did not otherwise perceive you to be a conscientious man, and conversant in the Scriptures, I should question whether you had learned those first Christian lessons, of humility and modesty,

which teach *us not to be wise in our own conceits*. This duty of hearing and regarding our spiritual guides and pastors is enjoined in texts of Scripture as plain and express as those you recommend to me. *Ephes.* iv. 11, 12, 13, 14, where it is shown to be necessary for us, in order to our preservation from being *tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of new doctrine*. Also *1 Thess.* iv. 12, 13; *Heb.* xiii. 17; *Malachi* ii. 7; and many other such places. I am sure it is that without which I should have been undone.

A. What I said before against divisions, may satisfy you that I am no despiser of the Church or the ministers thereof. But I have read many of the books written *for* as well as those *against* Infant Baptism. Most of the former are written by ministers; and it is in their books that we expect the best of their reasons and proofs.

P. I had done the same: but I find that without the other, it is not nigh so useful. A living guide at hand, to explain things that are obscure, answer any emergent objection, inforce and clear an argument where it seems deficient, &c. is a help greater than one would think. A man that can read a good physic-book may think himself able to prescribe medicines to himself out of it; but he commonly makes bad work of it, if he goes about it. Besides that, in this case of spiritual direction, these are the men whom God has appointed to watch for our souls, as they that must give account: and he is most likely to give a blessing to his own means.

A. Did you find Mr. B. willing to discourse calmly and friendly with you? I have heard that they generally are apt to despise a man that comes with these scruples; and rather to chide, deride, and perhaps hate him; than patiently hear his reasons, and take pains to satisfy him.

P. I have heard the same. But I found by experience, that there is nothing more contrary to truth than that insinuation; which seems to have been raised on purpose to obstruct the fruit of their ministry. They do, on the contrary, own that this is one of their proper businesses, and that one of the greatest discouragements they meet with, is to find that people have so little regard for their advice and assistance, as not to send for them when they are sick, consult them when they are in any doubt, &c. When I had, in discourse with any Antipædobaptists, met with any new argument or objection that did puzzle me, and came to him with it; he did not only patiently give me the hearing, but also showed an unwillingness to part with me, until he had given full satisfaction to my mind: or, if the case required, he would show me some book to read at my leisure, where that matter was more fully cleared. In a word, as I have occasion to love him better, so I am satisfied that he loves me better than he did before I gave him that trouble.

A. I may then, perhaps, take your advice, and discourse with our minister or some other before I fully resolve. But in the

mean time, I desire you to let me know what were the chief reasons by which Mr. B. satisfied you.

P. It was the work of several conferences, reading of books and places of Scripture, to which he referred me. And you cannot think that the substance of all that, can be given in this half-hour, without great disadvantage to the force of the argument.

A. I shall make allowance for that. Only tell me the chief heads of matters. I will consider, confer, and read books about them at my leisure.

P. He first advised me (seeing I had already read and thought much of the matter) that I would let him know which of the reasons and objections brought by the Antipædobaptists I could answer myself? For they bring many arguments, some of more weight, some of less, and some of none at all.

A. This was a good method, both to shorten the dispute, and make it more distinct and clear.

P. I told him; that—

First, I did already understand that in the text of St. Matt. xxviii. 19, (which is the chief account of Christ's commission to baptize the nations,) *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them;* the word which is translated *teach*, does not properly signify *teach*, but *make disciples*; or *enter disciples*; or (to express it in one word, as our Saviour does) *disciple all the nations, or proselyte to me all the nations, baptizing them.*

A. Well; that is granted by all the understanding men of our opinion.

P. *Secondly,* That whereas in the text of St. John iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;* some Antipædobaptists do catch hold of the word *man* there, and say, it must be a man grown, and not a child; I understood that to be a mistake, proceeding from ignorance of the original word; and that our Saviour's own word is such as signifies *any one*, or *any person*, man, woman, or child.

A. But was not this to yield the whole matter at once? for if no person, man, woman, or child, can in God's ordinary way enter the kingdom of God without baptism? is not this a proof that children, as well as grown men, must be baptized?

P. I do think so now, that this text is enough to carry the whole dispute before it.

But I thought then, that though the words be general, yet they must interpret them with a limitation to such subjects as are capable of the thing spoken of: and I could not then conceive that a child, though he might be born of water, could be said to be born of the Spirit. And besides; I questioned whether by that phrase [*born of water and of the Spirit*] was meant baptism at all: or whether it were only an allegorical phrase, denoting by the word *water*, only the internal cleansing or sanctification of the heart. But these things he cleared to me afterward.

Another thing which I owned of myself, was, that I was satis-

fied that a child is not incapable of being entered into a covenant with God. For this was the express order of God himself; *Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12: You stand this day all of you before the Lord: your captains, &c. your little ones, &c. that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath.* And that they might and did receive in their infancy an outward sacrament, namely, the sacrament of circumcision, as a seal of this covenant, is also plain and confessed. So that I myself was able to see the weakness of all those arguments in the books of the Antipædobaptists, which represent an infant's being entered into any covenant at all with God, as an absurd or ridiculous thing: and that I accounted all such their sayings as make a mock at this (because the child has no sense,) to be very profane; as casting a reproach on the wisdom and former conduct of God himself in appointing circumcision to children eight days old. Moreover, whereas, some of them say, that this covenant which the little ones were entered into, and which was sealed to them by circumcision, was only a carnal covenant, to give them the land of *Canaan*, and to engage them in some carnal ordinances, and contained no spiritual privilege or engagement in it; I could see, myself, the falsehood of that pretence. For in *Gen. xvii.* where circumcision to the infants is instituted, the style of the covenant is: *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* And on God's part, not only to give them the land of *Canaan*, but thus; *To be a God to thee and thy seed after thee,* ver. 7. And so likewise in the aforesaid place of *Deut. xxix.* (where the little ones are entered) *That he may be a God unto thee.* And in *Chap. xxx.* (which is one continued recital of the terms of the covenant then entered) *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, &c.* v. 6. And on the man's part, v. 16. *To love the Lord, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, &c.*—These surely are spiritual things, and what our Saviour calls the first and great commandment.

And as for the covenant of the ten commandments in *Horeb.* I perceived that it was made with the infants as well as others. For forty years after (when all* that were twenty years old at the giving the law were dead in the wilderness) *Moses says, Deut. v. 2, 3, The Lord made a covenant with us in Horeb. Even with us who are all of us alive here this day.* Most of these were infants and little children at that time. So that I counted it plain, that infants may be entered into a covenant with God, to do some spiritual duties hereafter, of which they at present can have no knowledge or sense; and to receive some spiritual privileges.

A. Whether you call this covenant a carnal or a spiritual covenant; the right to it was conveyed down in a carnal way, from father to son, by a fleshly generation; and was a particular privilege of the offspring of *Abraham's* body.†

* *Numb. xvi. 32, 33. it. xxvi. 64, 65. † Gen. xvii. 12, 13.*

P. The covenant had this property, that whosoever was in it had a right to bring all his children to be entered into it in their infancy. But this was not limited or confined to the offspring of *Abraham's* body, for the words are,* *He that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed, &c., must be circumcised.* And so a proselyte was to *circumcise all his males,*† and then he was to be *as one born in the land.* So that the covenant extended then (as it does now) to all of any nation that would come into it; and they were to bring into it all the infant children, not only of their own body, but all that they had the legal custody or possession of.

A. But here is a question hotly disputed, Whether the circumcision given to these infants was to them a *seal of the righteousness of faith?* That it was so to *Abraham* himself, is expressly said by *St. Paul, Romans iv. 11*, even of that faith, by which he is the *Father of all them that believe* under the Gospel. But the Antipædo-baptists do deny that it was so to the infants; because they were not capable of having any faith at the time of their circumcision, as *Abraham* had.

P. This dispute seems to me only a contention about words. For as the Pædobaptists will not pretend that it was to the infants a seal of any actual faith then at that present wrought in their hearts: so the other cannot deny that it was to the infants the seal of a covenant then entered, by which covenant they were engaged to believe in the true God when they came to years of discretion. For I quoted before the very words of the covenant engaging them to *love the Lord, to walk in his ways, &c.* And that supposes *faith* in him.

And you may observe, that *St. Paul*, in *Rom. x. 6, 7, 8*, when he is going to quote some passages out of that very recital of the covenant in *Deut. xxx.* (into which the little ones were entered, *Deut. xxix.*) premises to the quotation these words: *But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise:* and then having recited those passages, he adds, *this is the word of faith which we preach.*

A. But do you think that the covenant made to *Abraham*, into which the little ones were admitted, did contain any engagement on God's part, to give an *eternal life* after this, which is the chief thing in the Gospel-covenant?

P. Not only I do think so; but all Christians, except the *Socians.* And it is plain by our Saviour's words. For he, at *Matt. xxii. 31*, proves to the Sadducees the resurrection of *Abraham* to eternal life, from these words; *I am the God of Abraham.* And those very words had been part of the covenant sealed by circumcision. These Sadducees were the only men in the Jewish Church that denied the resurrection: and our Saviour here tells them, they *err, not knowing the Scriptures.* But all the orthodox Jews believed and expected it, as we perceive by *St. Paul's appeal to*

* Gen. xvii. 12, 13. † Exod. xii. 48, 49.

them themselves, *Acts xxiv. 15.* And it was from this covenant (which was sealed by circumcision) that they expected it

A. It is, you know, disputed between the two parties, whether Abraham's covenant was the same with ours: the Antipædobaptists, many of them, say, No: for ours is called, *Heb. viii. 6, a better covenant, established upon better promises.*

P. I know it is so disputed. But that in which they are agreed, and which is plain, is enough for our purpose, namely, that in both administrations, faith in God, and obedience to him, is required, and a faith also in the Messiah; the Jews believing him as to come; we, as already come; and that in both there are delivered promises, both for this life, and for that which is to come. On which account St. Paul, Gal. iii. 8, calls the former by the name of *the Gospel preached before to Abraham;* and at ver. 17, *the covenant confirmed before of God in Christ.* And that in both of them there is granted the direction and assistance of the same Spirit.

They are also agreed on the other side, that now since the actual coming of Christ, there are more clear revelations of the future glory, greater and stronger motives to faith and obedience, (which, if we neglect or despise, we shall be subject to greater condemnation,) a fuller and more particular knowledge of the nature and offices of Christ, and of his work of redemption wrought for us, &c. On which account ours may be called, in some sense, a *new or a better covenant;* though the substance of the things declared, enacted, and revealed, be the same.

But the only thing that concerns our present purpose, is this; that an infant then was entered into a covenant containing in it an engagement to such spiritual things, as he could no more understand, than an infant now can understand the things covenanted at baptism.

So far, therefore, I told Mr. B. I could go of myself in answering the doubts and objections against Infant Baptism; that I could see plainly that an infant is not incapable of being entered into covenant with God, obliging him to do and to believe some things hereafter, (if he live,) of which at present he can have no sense; and that upon such his entrance he may be made immediately an heir of eternal life by covenant, which will hold good so long till he, by actual sin, does break the said covenant. And that I conceived this transaction, that was then done by God's command in spiritual things, to bear some resemblance to what we see every day done in temporal affairs; namely, a deed of land with covenants is sealed to an infant, and the guardian, in the infant's name, seals the counterpart; there is no difficulty in understanding that the infant, when he grows up, must (if he will hold that land) perform the covenants mentioned in the deed: and that if he will not, he loses all right to that inheritance: but in the mean time the deed is not insignificant, because the infant does not understand it.

A. You granted that an infant is not incapable of all this; but that such a thing is possible to be done, if God please: and that

some such thing was done by his order in the case of circumcision. But this does not prove, that (now, since circumcision is abolished) we must set up any such practice in spiritual things without an order from him.

P. No. So I thought then that this does not follow. Neither do I think now that it follows merely from thence; that because an infant is *capable* of such a token of a covenant as baptism is, therefore it must be given to him. But this takes off the force of all those arguments of the Antipædobaptists, which they raise from the *incapacity* of an infant. One half of what they say is, not only that God has not ordered infants to be baptized; but also that it would have been an absurd or foolish thing to order it. And they do not mind, that all the jeers they cast upon *baby baptism*, (as they call it,) taken from the incapacity of an infant for such an holy ordinance, do reflect upon the wisdom of God, who appointed circumcision, which, by the same rule, they may call *baby circumcision*.

Mr. *B.* also showed me afterwards grounds from Scripture that do much confirm the consequence from the use of circumcision to that of baptism. But I am telling you as yet, only how far I could argue or answer their arguments myself.

A. Thus far you could go: and I do not see but you might go so far upon good ground. What were the remaining difficulties at which you stuck?

P. Nothing but that which you mentioned just now. That though there is no reason but Christ might have ordered baptism to infants proportionably to the use of circumcision; yet that I could not find that he had done so. And therefore, I questioned whether it were his meaning that infants should be entered (at least by any visible token) now, (though I saw plainly they were formerly,) because neither he nor his apostles have expressed any such thing, (as it was plainly expressed before,) nor have given us any example of it in the New Testament.

A. Well. That is the chief of all. And that was a thing in which I am sure Mr. *B.* could not satisfy you. Pray what did he say to that?

P. He said that our Saviour's command to *disciple the nations*, *baptizing them*, being given in very short and general words, expressing only the term *nations*, and not descending to express particularly the sorts of persons that make up the nation: it was necessary, in order to our judging whether he meant infants and all, or only the adult men of the nations, to mind what was then and before that time usually done in the Jewish Church in receiving any proselyte of the nations that came over from his heathenism to the true religion, and desired that he and his children might be admitted into covenant with the true God.

And that it was useful also to know how the primitive Christians (who lived so nigh the times of the Apostles, as they might easily

know what the Apostles ordered with respect to infants) did practice this command.

And as to the first of these things: he made me understand (what I knew not before) that such a proselyte of the nations was wont to be baptized, and his children likewise.

A. This is news. He was wont to be circumcised, he and all his males we know. But baptized, how does he prove that?

P. From a great many passages in the books of the Jewish writers, who in setting down the customs of their nation, do mention the baptizing of such a proselyte and his children, male and female, as ordinarily as they do the circumcising of the male ones.

A. Did he show you these passages in the books themselves? I wish I could be satisfied whether there be any truth in this matter of fact.

P. The books themselves are written in the *Hebrew* or *Chaldee* language. But there are several *English* and *Latin* writers of unquestionable credit, who do quote the places; such as Dr. *Hammond*, Dr. *Lighthfoot*, Mr. *Selden*, *Ainsworth*, &c. Of these he showed and lent me some, and directed me to others. They do produce the words of the Jewish writers; name the book and page, and give the translation. He lent me also a book called *The History of Infant Baptism*, where, (as in the book itself, are given the testimony of the eldest Christians concerning the baptizing infants,) so in the Introduction, the chief of those places concerning the Jewish baptism are collected; and references given to the books before named, and a great many others, for any one that will, to find more of the same. I spent two or three weeks in getting and reading these books about the Jewish baptism of proselytes and their children, and at last was fully satisfied that they had such a custom: and I understand by a late book of *Leo Modena*,* and by some other accounts, that they have the same custom still, if any proselyte comes over to them. And I found that though there was a dispute between Dr. *Hammond* on one side, and Mr. *Selden* and Mr. *Tombs* (who was the most learned of the Antipedobaptists) on the other side, concerning the children of natural Jews; yet they all agree, that the infant children of proselytes were baptized; and that it was a common phrase with them to call such infants proselytes as well as their parents. For they have such sayings as these:

If† with a proselyte, his sons and his daughters be made proselytes; that which is done by their father redounds to their good. And Again.

At proselyte that is under age, is baptized upon the knowledge (or profession) of the house of judgment, (that is, the synagogue or church of the place,) and they become to him a father. And again,

An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or finds an heathen infant, and baptizes him for a proselyte; behold he is a proselyte.

* Hist. of the Jews, Part V. ch. ii. † Gemara, Bab. Chetuboth. Ch. i

‡ Maimon. Is. Bia. Ch. xiii. § 7.

Maimon. *Helach Aibrim.* ch. viii. For it seems that it was their custom with infant children whom they either took in war, or found exposed in the highways by their heathen parents. Of which you may see more in the aforesaid books.

A. If I were sure of this it would go a great way with me. For such a custom would direct one to another sense of our Saviour's word, *disciple* or *make disciples*, than I should otherwise have thought of. For putting the case that it was then customary to baptize such infants, and call them *proselytes*, and they were usually said to be *made proselytes*, (which seems much the same word as *disciples*,) our Saviour's command in these words, *Go, disciple, or make disciples* all the nations, baptizing them, would seem to me to include the infants as well as others. For a man is to take words in that sense in which they were current, at the place and time in which they were spoken. So that it would, in that case, seem to me necessary that our Saviour, if he meant they should, in baptizing the nations, not baptize infants, as had been usually done, should have said so.

P. You draw naturally the same consequence that Mr. *B.* urged to me. For when I had read the aforesaid books, and owned myself satisfied that there was such a custom, he said to me ; " Suppose an Antipædobaptist congregation should send one of their teachers to some heathen island, with a commission in those words ; *Go, disciple that nation, and baptize them* ; he indeed would not think himself commanded to baptize the infants, because that was not the custom of the church that sent him. But supposing a Minister to be sent by the church of *England* with a commission in the very same words ; *Go, disciple that nation, and baptize them* ; would not he think himself commanded to baptize the infants of such as were converted and baptized ? " I granted he would ; because that was the known custom and meaning of the church that sent him. " So," says he, " when the Apostles were sent with a commission given in the said words ; what could they think other, but that they must do as had been usually done in the Church where they and their master had always lived ? "

He asked me also this question ; " Suppose our Saviour had bid the Apostles *Go, disciple all the nations and* (instead of baptizing had said) *circumcise them* ; must they not have circumcised the infants of the nations as well as the grown men, though there had been no express mention of infants in the commission ? " I granted it. " Then," said he, " what is the reason that in case circumcision had been appointed to the Gentile nations, it must of course have been given to infants ? " I said, because the Apostles knew of themselves that circumcision was usually given to infants. He desired me to draw the same consequence from what the Apostles must know of baptism usually given to infants.

A. I should be almost of his mind if the matter of fact were certain. But of what credit are those Jewish books that mention this custom ?

P. They are such as the Jews own for the most authentic they have, except the Bible. And not only the books of particular men, but their *Misna* and *Talmud* (which are to them much the same as the book of Canons, or the Rubrick are in our Church) are full of these orders about receiving and baptizing proselytes, the men and their children. Now how fallible soever the Jews were in judging what is fit to be done ; yet they cannot fail of being sufficient witnesses of the matter of fact, and able to tell what was actually done among themselves.

A. From what authorities in *Moses'* law did the Jews infer this necessity of a proselyte's baptism. *

P. They reckoned that the whole body of their nation, men, women, and infants, was baptized unto *Moses* (not only *in the cloud and the sea*, as St. Paul says they were, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, For the cloud and sea covered men and children all alike, but also) just before the giving of the law, in *Exod.* xix. where Moses is ordered thus, ver. 19, *Sanctify the people to-day, and to-morrow, &c.* They hold that the way by which *Moses* sanctified them on these two days, was by washing them, (for they prove from many places of their law, that by *sanctifying*, is often meant *washing* ; especially where any man is said to sanctify other men.) And since it was commanded in *Numb.* xv. 16, *One law and one manner shall be for you and for the stranger*, (or proselyte) &c. they conclude, that as their own nation, men, women, and children, were entered into covenant by the sanctification of washing or baptism, so ought a proselyte : and if he will have his children entered, so ought they.

A. I see it necessary to know the sense in which the words of any law were used at the time when the law was given. But does it not seem strange that we should have need to recur to the Jewish *Talmud* for settling a point in our religion ?

P. You express that question improperly. The point of proselyting (or making disciples) the nations, is settled by Christ. But since he was a Jew by nation, and spoke the phrases of that language ; what hinders but that we may learn from Jewish books what that phrase of *proselyting*, or *making disciples*, did then usually signify in that language ? One of the main articles of our faith is, that Christ was *crucified* ; and since crucifying was a sort of death not ordinarily used by the Jews, but by the Romans, (for it was a common way by which the Roman slaves, guilty of any notorious crime, were executed,) we understand by Roman writers what sort of death it was, the cruelty of it, the form of the gibbet or cross to which they were nailed, &c., more particularly than we do by the words of Scripture. And yet nobody is so silly as to say, we ground the belief of that article upon the Roman histories. It is only the use and proper signification of the word that we learn from them.

A. If this was the meaning of the word *discipling* ; and this was the custom to make the infant children of proselytes *disciples*, (as well as the parents,) and call them so, and baptize them ; the rules

and conditions of this dispute are turned upon the Antipædobaptists. For whereas they use to say; "Since baptism was a new ordinance instituted by *Christ*; his saying nothing of infants, is a sign he meant not to include them." It will be rather said, on the contrary, "since it was no new ordinance, but a thing that had been usually given to infants; his not excepting of infants, is a sign he meant not to exclude them." So that the proof will be on them to show that infants are forbidden to be baptized.

P. You say no more than Dr. *Lightfoot* (a man of the greatest skill in the Hebrew customs and language) says on this * argument. "If baptism and the baptizing of infants had been a new thing, and unheard of until *John Baptist* came, as circumcision was, until God appointed it to *Abraham*; there would have been, no doubt, as express command for baptizing infants, as there was for circumcising them. But when the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used, as appears from incontestable evidence from their writers; there needed not express assertions that such and such persons were to be the objects of baptism," &c.

And in another book,† having shown at large that this was the custom he concludes, "That since it was ordinary in all ages before, to have infants baptized, if *Christ* would have had that custom abolished, he would have expressly forbidden it. So that his and the Scripture's silence in this matter does confirm and establish Infant Baptism for ever."

And there is a quotation which Mr. *B.* showed me from a Christian writer of the oldest time, which further confirms this notion and meaning of the word *discipling*, to have been then in common use. It is from *Justin Martyr's Apology* for the Christian Religion to the Emperor *Antoninus Pius*. This *Justin* was himself a Jew (I mean a Samaritan Jew) born in the Apostles' times, and converted to Christianity about thirty years after: and he, speaking there of the continent life led by the Christians, says, "Several persons among us sixty or seventy years old, of both sexes, that were *discipled* to *Christ* in their childhood, do continue virgins." He uses the very same word that is in the text of St. *Matthew*: *Go, disciple the nations, baptizing them.* And this, he says, was done to them in their childhood.

A. I shall judge better of this matter when I read the books you mention.

P. Our Saviour also, *Matt. x. 42*, speaks of a cup of cold water given to one of those little ones in the name of a *disciple*. But there is one thing more you will observe if you read the said books namely, that the Jews did commonly call the baptism of such a proselyte, his *regeneration* (or being *born again*,) and so do all the Christians of those eldest times call the Christian baptism by that name, and the said *Justin Martyr* for one. This puts it beyond all doubt that our Saviour by those words, *John iii. 3, 5, Except*

* Harmony on *John i. 25.*

† Ho. *Heb. on Matt. iii.*

any one be born again, born of water, &c. does mean baptism; for that was the common phrase for it at that time.

A. This takes off one of the objections which you said you had against applying that text to the proof of Infant Baptism. But what say you to the other, *born of water and of the Spirit?* How can a baptized infant be said to be born of the Spirit?

P. There are some operations of the Holy Spirit, as working actual faith, repentance, &c. in the heart, of which an infant indeed is not capable. But when God does apply the pardon of original guilt, does transfer a person out of the state of nature into the state of grace and of the Christian covenant, does unite him as a member into the mystical body of Christ, accept him for his child, &c., these things and these promises are spoken of in Scripture as done, sealed, and applied to the person *by the Spirit*. Now of these latter an infant is capable. And *John the Baptist* is said to be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

And a person that is capable of some of the great ends of baptism wrought by the Spirit may be baptized for them: though he be not as yet capable of all the several ends for which baptism is designed. For our Saviour, who was not capable of remission of sins, regeneration, &c. was baptized for the other ends that baptism is designed for.

Mr. B. showed me where the chief of the Antipædobaptists, *Tombs, Danvers, &c.* do own this application of *Christ's Spirit* to infants, and God's putting them into Christ, uniting them to him by his Holy Spirit; and the ancients do speak at the same rate.

A. Then it is in this sense, I suppose, that the Church gives thanks to God, "That it has pleased him to regenerate the baptized infant *with the Holy Spirit*; to receive him as his own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into his holy Church."

P. Yes, doubtless.

A. But will not this text so cleared from the objections, and understood thus (that except any person, man, woman, or child, be baptized, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God,) prove too much, in your sense, in respect of such infants as by some unavoidable accident do miss of baptism?

P. Not more than it does now in your sense, being understood of all grown persons; many of whom do, after they have resolved to receive baptism, miss of it by sudden death, &c. All such texts of Scripture are to be understood with an allowance, namely, that such or such an ordinance is appointed by God as the *ordinary* means or *ordinary* condition of salvation: not that we are to bind God to the means that he has bound us to. As in the case of *circumcision* omitted, though the rule was as peremptory as this; *That soul shall be cut off*; yet where his providence made it impracticable, he did not execute the penalty; and yet in ordinary cases the rule stood firm.

A. I think the Antipædobaptists, generally, have in this respect the most charitable opinion of any. The most of them (all of them,

except such as pry into the decrees of election and reprobation) are very positive that all children dying in infancy, baptized or not, born of parents godly or ungodly, Christians, Turks, or heathens, do go to heaven.

P. This were to good purpose, if the kingdom of heaven were at their disposing.

But if we have no promise of God, it is not a promise of man that will keep us from despair. I remember a saying of St. **Austin** against the **Pelagians** (who denied any original sin in infants; and said, if infants died unbaptized, they might be saved; that is, be in some good place hereafter, though not in the kingdom of heaven:) "Let us not of our own heads promise any eternal salvation to infants without the baptism of Christ, which the Holy Scripture, that is to be preferred to all human wit, does not promise."

A. What made these **Pelagians** say they should not go to heaven, and yet be in some other good place?

P. They said they should be in some good place, as having no sin. But they did not dare say they should go to heaven, except they were baptized; because our Saviour had given that rule last mentioned, *except any one be born of water, &c.*

A. Then they judged that that text does include infants and all.

P. No Christian at that time made any doubt of that. Suppose you have a child that is like to die, and some advise you to pray for its soul, and others dissuade, saying, all children are saved whether you pray for them or not: Which would you count the most charitable of these?

A. I should take the counsel of those that advised me to pray.

P. Do the same in respect to those that advise you to baptize it. For you see that in both these texts, that of *Matt. xviii. 19*, and this of *John iii. 5*, our Saviour's words are general and universal; *All nations; every person*: and that the reasons which the Antipædobaptists bring why infants should not be meant as well as others, do fail of proof. Therefore it is good to be sure: and take the advice of the judicious Mr. *Hooker*; "If Christ himself who giveth salvation, do require baptism: it is not for us, that look for salvation, to sound and examine him, whether unbaptized men may be saved," (by men he means any person of human nature; for he is there speaking of Infant Baptism,) "but seriously to do the thing that is required; and religiously to fear the danger which may grow by the want thereof."

A. But they say, they do not promise this of their own head. Our Saviour, speaking of little children, *Mark x. 14*, says, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Therefore all children go to heaven.

P. He says, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*: which proves that they are capable of going to heaven; and that many infants do go thither. But he adds at the same place; therefore *suffer them to come unto me, and forbid (or withhold) them not.* And since our Saviour is now present with us only in his ordinances and sacraments, what way have we to bring our children to him, as he

orders, but by baptism, to offer and dedicate them to him? And here I would ask you one question; they say that all children, heathen's children and all, go to heaven. Do they judge that heaven is their natural portion, as being human creatures, and because they are born of human race? or that they have it by the merits and purchase of Christ and his death?

A. O! by Christ. They do not offer to say that the kingdom of heaven is given to any human creature, but only for the sake of Christ's merits.

P. Now does it not seem to you strange, that the children of heathen men, of such men as are *without Christ*, as St. Paul says, *Eph. ii. 12, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*, should have an equal interest in Christ with the children of Christians, who do offer and dedicate both themselves and their children to Christ? And that there should be no more promise to a good Christian for his children, than there is to the children of Pagans? St. Paul, having told the *Ephesians* that they had been such *strangers from the covenant, &c.*, says in the next words; *but now in Christ Jesus you who were some time afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ*. But it seems they had been nigh once before, namely in their infancy. Pray tell me: Do they count such infants members of Christ, united to him, parts of his body the Church, redeemed by him, included in his covenant and purchase?

A. They do not say, that such infants or any infants are members of the Church. For that would prove that they must be baptized; baptism being the entrance into the Church. And what they would say to your other words, *members of his body, united, redeemed, covenant, purchase, &c.*, I know not, (I believe some of them would say one thing, and some another,) but that they are saved by him, they say.

P. The Scripture calls the Church his body;* and him the Saviour † of the body: but that he should be the Saviour of any that are not of his body, is beside the Scripture. And that also puts every where a great difference between being *in Christ* on one side, and *of the world or without Christ, or in the kingdom of darkness*, on the other. But that one place of St. Paul, *1 Cor. vii. 14*, does most expressly show the different state of some infants from that of others: for he puts a case in which their *children would be unclean: but now, says he, they are holy*.

A. I wish we had a good comment on that text. I must frankly own to you, that I am not very well satisfied with the exposition which those of our opinion give of it; that St. Paul, persuading there the man that had an unbelieving wife, not to put her away, because she an unbeliever, is so sanctified by him a believer, that the children are *holy*, should mean no more than this: that they are not bastards. For I do not see that they would have been

* Eph. i. 23.

† Ib.d. v. 22.

bastards if both the parents had continued in unbelief. Nor do I find the words ever so used, that *holy* should signify *legitimate*; or that *unclean*, when opposed to *holy* (as it is here,) should signify *bastard*. Nor does that seem to have been the doubt, or question, put by these people to St. *Paul*: Whether the use of the marriage bed did in such case continue *lawful*, and the issue legitimate; but whether the continuing of cohabitation were *advisable*, considering the danger of being drawn to idolatry, and the abomination which the heathen husband must have of his wife's worshipping Christ, or the Christian husband of his wife's worshipping of idols in the same house: and considering that St. *Paul* had before written to them.* *not to accompany with fornicators, idolaters, &c.*

P. If one reads the place attentively from *verse 12* to *16*, he shall plainly perceive (what you say) that the query which they had written to St. *Paul*, about this matter, was not of *lawful* or *unlawful*: but of *expedient* or *inexpedient*. For they had sent to him several queries about several matters, as appears at *verse 1*, *Now concerning the things whereof you wrote to me.*

Some of their queries had been about the *lawfulness* or *sinfulness* of some things. And to them St. *Paul* answers not by way of his *advice*, but by the *authority* of Christ: as at *verse 10*, *I command: yet not I, but the Lord.*

But to this question of cohabitation in case of different religions, he answers in another strain; *To these speak I, not the Lord.* And his advice is not absolute neither: for he advises the continuance of dwelling together only in case the unbelieving party be willing.

If any brother (that is any man that has embraced Christianity) *hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away; and the woman that has a husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.* Now this is what he would never have said, if the question had been of *lawful* or *sinful*; as whether the unbelieving woman would have been in the state of an *harlot* to a Christian husband, or the children so begotten *bastards*. For the willingness of the unbelieving party to cohabit, would not in such a case have mended the matter at all. For a willing *harlot*, that is *pleased to dwell with a man*, is as bad, if not a worse *harlot*, than one that is over persuaded against her will, and the children as much *bastards*.

And besides: How could a man that had had several legitimate children by his wife whilst they were both heathens, fall into a doubt that those that should be born to him after he became a Christian, would be bastards, merely because she would not become a Christian too?

A. I am persuaded, as I said, that St. *Paul* means something more by *sanctified*, *unclean*, and *holy*. But what he means I cannot tell. For the interpretation given by the Pædobaptists of *holy*

that is *federally holy* or *in covenant with God*, is far-fetched too. It makes St Paul prove a thing that was obscure, by a thing that is more obscure. *I would not have you part.* *The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband, so that the children which she shall bear to him shall be in covenant.* In what covenant do they mean, in a state of salvation?

P. Some explain it so: in the covenant of grace. But some others (that will not allow that a child who after proves wicked, ever was in a state of salvation) do, by *covenant holiness*, mean only a right to Church privileges; every one that is a member of the visible Church has a right to Church privileges, and so is *holy* in that respect; though every such member is not in a state of salvation. And from the child's having that *covenant holiness*, they concluded its right to the seal of the covenant.

You cannot deny that this sense of the word *holy* is much more agreeable to the general use of that word in Scripture, than the other. *Holy*, that is, *belonging to God, accepted of God, set apart to God.* And *unclean*, that is, *out of covenant with God*, is a very common use of the word. *Acts x. 28. Rom. xi. 16.*

A. Pray how did Mr. B. expound this text to you?

P. He confessed there had been various interpretations of it. But that which seemed to him more natural, plain, and agreeable to the scope of St. Paul there, than any of these new ones, is that which, he said, was most current among the ancient Christians. And I also do think it so, since I have considered and compared it with the text: but I confess at first it seemed very new to me, because the sense in which we have been used, in these latter times, to take words, does prejudice us against any other, though many times that other do upon search appear to be the ancient sense of them.

A. What was his interpretation, which you say is the ancient one?

P. First, he observed to me, that the word which is there translated (*is sanctified*) is in the original (*has been sanctified*.)

A. I have seen many on both sides write it so. But then how come our translators to alter the sense?

P. The properties of languages are, it seems, such, that that is sometimes necessary, when the sense requires it: and they thought, it seems, that it required it here. But so it is in the original: *An unbelieving husband has been sanctified by his wife; and an unbelieving wife has been sanctified by her husband, &c.* And by this the ancients understood (*has been converted*, or persuaded to receive the Christian faith and baptism;) or as St. Paul expresses it in the verse next but one, *has been saved by her.* So in 1 Cor. i. 1, 2. *To those that at Corinth are sanctified [or, (as it is there also in the original) *have been sanctified*] called to be saints,* that is, to all that have embraced Christianity there: or have been baptized: for the word *sanctified* is by all old Christian writers frequently used for *baptized*.

A. Well. Suppose it be so: *The unbelieving party has often-times been converted by the believing party.* This indeed agrees well with St. Paul's scope: for he is there persuading them to stay with their unbelieving partners on account of this hope, and it is the same encouragement that he uses verse 16. *What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband, &c.* But still I do not see how this gives much light to what follows; *Else were your children unclean: but now are they holy.*

P. You must note that the word here translated [*holy*] is in St. Paul's epistles (when it is applied to persons) far oftener translated *saints*: however, they happened here to translate it *holy*. And that word, *saints*, was in the same use then, as the word *Christians* is with us. As in the Creed the *communion of saints* is nothing else but the communion of *Christians*. And St. Paul's direction of his epistle, *To all the saints* at such a place, is as much as to say, *to all the Christians there.* And the word that he uses here which we read *holy*, is the very same as that in the Creed, and in the directions aforesaid of St. Paul's epistles, is translated *saints*.

A. Now I begin to understand your meaning. "The unbelieving party is generally prevailed on by the believing party. Were it not so, the children of such matches would be brought up to heathenism; but now we see they are generally made Christians, or *saints*." This is what you understand St. Paul to say.

P. You take it right. He would have them stay with their partners that did not yet believe: and persuade them thus: "It frequently has been observed, that an unbelieving husband has been sanctified, or brought to the faith, and so to baptism, by his wife: and likewise an unbelieving wife by her husband. Were it not so, that the faith of the one did generally prevail against the infidelity of the other, the children of such of you as are so matched would be generally kept unbaptized, and so be unclean. But now we see, by the grace of God, a contrary effect, for they are generally baptized, and so become holy, *saints*, or sanctified. It is much the same advice that St. Peter gives to women that had unbelieving husbands, 1 Pet. iii. 1, *That if any obey not the word, they be won by the conversation of the wife, &c.*

A. Do they think that St. Paul means *such children as we now see generally baptized?*

P. Yes. The term *saints* is not given in the ^{1st} ^{Testament} ^{ser.} but to baptized persons. They called no others ^{by} the names of *saints or brethren.*

A. This fits your purpose indeed. This was all you wanted; that there should be in Scripture mention of any infant baptized. I am apt to doubt that this interpretation has been invented to serve a turn by some Pædobaptist that was puzzled with that objection of the Antipædobaptists, that there is no example of it in Scripture: not that it has come naturally into the mind of any reader, but on that occasion.

P. I can, as it happens, cure your doubt. For there are upon record several commentaries of ancient Christian writers upon this text, who do expound it much to this purpose. And I have noted down the words of two of them that lived 1300 years ago, and had never heard of any Antipædobaptist, who do explain it just in the sense that I mentioned. I will, if you please, show you their own words.

A. How did you know first that they had never heard of any Antipædobaptists? This must have been within 300 years of the Apostles' time.

P. They do both of them say, at other places of their books, that they never did.

A. Now this looks very odd. How should men that lived at a time when no Antipædobaptist had ever been heard of, come to say in their books that they never heard of any? What gave them occasion to speak of it then?

P. They disputed about original sin, as I told you before. The Pelagians said there is no such thing. St. Austin saith: Why then are infants baptized, if they have no sin? They answered, it was, "that they might be sanctified [or made saints] in Christ." St. Austin said, he had never before met with any Christian, Churchman or sectary, (that owned the Scriptures,) nor read any Christian writer, who taught any other doctrine, but that infants are to be baptized *for pardon of sin*. From whence it is my consequence, that much less had he heard or read of any that denied that they are to be baptized at all.

Pelagius was reproached by some people, that by denying original sin in infants, he did deny any necessity of baptism to them. He answered in a rage; That the thing which they accuse him of saying, was a thing "that he never heard any man, no not any impious sectary, say. For who," says he, "is so ignorant of what is read in the Gospel (meaning John iii, 5.) as to hinder infants from being baptized, and born again in Christ, and to make them miss of the kingdom of heaven?" For though he thought a child dying unbaptized would have no punishment, as having no sin; yet he thought it could not come to heaven, as having no interest in Christ.

A. Did not *Tertullian* live before these men?

P. Yes. He did.

A. Then *husc* is this sense? They never heard of any one that ever was against Infant Baptism: and we know he gave his opinion against it.

P. You observe right. It must be concluded that they had never seen his book of baptism: for he having revolted to heresy, his books were not much read by Churchmen; and that observation of theirs, that there had been none before their time of that opinion, does not hold, without an exception of that one man. But even he, in the truest editions, speaks against the use of it only at

such times, when there is no urgent necessity, by the child's being in danger of death.

A. Well. What is the comment on this text given by these two men?

P. You shall have it in their own words. St. Austin set down the texts : *An unbelieving husband has been sanctified [so he reads it ; and so it is in the original] by his believing wife : and an unbelieving wife by her believing husband :* and on that gives this comment ; “I suppose it had then happened, that several wives had been brought to the faith by their believing husbands, and husbands by their believing wives. And though he does not mention their names, yet he makes use of their example to confirm his advice.” Then he sets down the rest of the text, *else were your children unclean ; but now they are holy [or saints,]* and gives this comment, “For there were then Christian infants that were sanctified [or made holy, or saints,] some by the authority of one of their parents : some by the consent of both ; which would not be, if as soon as one party believed, the marriage were dissolved ; and the infidelity of the parties were not borne with till there were an opportunity of believing.” By an infant's being *sanctified* by the authority of its parents, can be meant nothing but its being baptized : and the word *sanctified*, is a common word with him for *baptized*.

Pelagius wrote a comment on both the epistles to the *Corinthians*. And on that text makes this comment ; “There were by this time examples, both of men whom their wives, and of women whom their husbands, had gained over to Christ ; and of infants, concerning whom the Christian desire, even of one of their parents, had prevailed that they should be made Christians.”

A. This is indeed as you explain it. But did not Mr. B. own to you that some of the ancients expound the text otherwise?

P. He did own that there are some that make no more doubt of it than the Antipædobaptists do. But that the most, and those the most ancient, do understand it of baptismal holiness.

A. Are there any more texts of Scripture, or arguments that he produced to you ?

P. Yes, several. But the time will not allow to mention any more than the heads of things to you. By referring me to many texts where circumcision is mentioned, and many where baptism is mentioned, he made it plain to me, that baptism serves to the same use and purpose now, that circumcision did to the Jewish Church : to confirm the truth of the promises on God's part, and instate the partakers in the privileges of the Church of God, and to denote the obligation of the party (if he lives) to faith and obedience.

That baptism is a seal of the covenant, which is for substance the same covenant that was established then : and, therefore, that God's command to give the seal in infancy then, does continue a command to us, and is a sufficient declaration of his will to us

now, unless he had somewhere declared an alteration of his will in that regard.

That the seal should be given indifferently to *all nations* and to *both sexes*, did need a particular declaration, because that was otherwise in the case of circumcision, and that is accordingly particularly declared by St. Paul, *Gal.* iii. 28, where, speaking of baptism, he says, there is in respect of it *neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female*: that is, there is no difference between them: but that there should be neither young nor old, needed no declaration, because that was a ruled case before, in the use both of Jewish baptism, of which we spoke before, and of circumcision itself. It was a known thing all along before in the covenant, as it was made with *Abraham* and renewed to *Moses*. There was need of an express prohibition, if infants, that had ever been members of the visible Church and people of God, had been now to be excluded. Especially when St. Peter, persuading the Jews to Christianity and Baptism, tells them, *Acts* iii. 25. *Ye are the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers, &c.* Now that covenant had ever included infants: and therefore, when he says again, *Acts* ii. 39, *Repent and be baptized, &c., for the promise is to you and your children, &c.*, it follows, that they were still to have a covenant including infants; or else it would have been a covenant altered much to the worse in that respect; if the Jews, when they became Christians, were to lose the advantage of having their children admitted as Church members by circumcision, and have nothing substituted for them instead thereof.

A. We grant that baptism does resemble circumcision in many uses of it, as a seal, an entrance into the Church, &c. But so did many other things, the Ark of *Noah*, the Sea, the Cloud, &c. And, therefore, your consequence, that it is to be applied to the same persons as circumcision was, is not very plain, unless you could show from Scripture that it is appointed by Christ to be to us in the stead or place of circumcision.

P. The Scripture does say that, in effect, when in *Col.* ii. 11 12, it calls baptism the *circumcision of Christ*: or as it would more intelligibly and more agreeably to the sense of St. Paul be rendered, and is in several translations rendered, “the Christian circumcision,” that is, the sacrament which is appointed by Christ to us instead of circumcision.

A. Turn to that text and expound it.

P. The *Colossians* were going to make two additions to the Christian religion. One was the worship of Angels, taught by the Philosophers: the other circumcision, taught by the Jews: St. Paul, at ver. 8, 9, 10, shows that the first was needless; for that having Christ they were complete in him, who is the head of all angels. And at ver. 11, 12, 13, that the other was needless too: *for in Christ, says he, you are circumcised, &c. by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, &c.* He cannot mean that

they were circumcised by that action, by which Christ in his infancy was circumcised. He must mean, by that which Christ has appointed for, or instead of circumcision to a Christian.

And here, if St. Paul had meant this as applicable to the grown men only amongst them, and not to the children; might they not reasonably have objected; "It is true, we have baptism instead of circumcision: but what have our children? Nothing at all."

You will find all the ancient Christians call baptism, "the spiritual circumcision, the circumcision done without hands, the Christian circumcision, our circumcision," &c.

Do not you remember how angry some Jews that had lately received the Christian faith were with St. Paul, Acts xxi. 21, for that they had heard that he taught all the Jews that were among the Gentiles, that they ought not to circumcise their children? How much more, think you, would they have objected to him, if he had taught them that they ought not to baptize them neither? And since we do not find that they objected that to him, we have reason to conclude that he never taught so.

A. But neither do we find, on the other side, that St. Paul made that apology to them, that they had baptism instead of it.

P. You do not read it there. But you do in the aforesaid place of his letter to the Colossians, (who were troubled with that sort of judaizing Christians,) that they had the Christian circumcision, viz. baptism.

Does not he, in his epistle to the Romans, ch. ii. ver. 17, tell the Gentiles that had embraced the faith, that they were now *grafted into the olive tree*: from which the unbelieving Jews were cut off, and did *partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree*; that is, of all the privileges which the Jewish Church had? And does he not say, Gal. iii. 14, that *the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles*? And was not that a great part of it, to have their children admitted into the covenant, and into the privileges of the Church and people of God? And this privilege of bringing in their infants, had been ever granted to such Gentiles as did embrace the Jewish religion, as was said before.

A. But as soon as John the Baptist came baptizing, this privilege was declared to be abrogated. For he says to the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to be baptized; *Think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father*. They must show personal fruits of repentance, if they would be baptized, Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9.

P. Was this case of theirs any thing like that of infants? *These were a generation of vipers*, that had by their actual sin and hypocrisies forfeited all the covenant right which they originally had: and had great need of actual repentance. This does not prove that any infant would have been so sent back.

A. None could be sent back where no one came, or were brought: and we do not read that any infants at all were brought to him.

P. It is true: there is no express mention of any; nor could it

well be expected in any account that is so short in all. But if you will read the books I mentioned of the Jewish Baptism, you will find that they prove it to have been so ordinary a thing, and practised of course, for people that came to baptism to bring their children with them, that they take it for granted that those that came to *John*, did so: and that the reason it is not mentioned, is, because it was a practice so ordinarily known at that time, that there was no mention of it: as, for the same reason, you read in the Old Testament the history of five hundred years together, without any mention of any one infant circumcised.

St. Ambrose, who lived so near those times, that he might inquire of the Jews their customs, and know much better than we, speaks of the infants baptized by *John* the Baptist: and so does *St. Austin* after him. Now since it was so ordinary to bring infants; if *St. John* had rejected them, that would have been as proper to have been recorded as the history of his rejecting the Pharisees.

A. I will, God willing, read those books of baptism used by the Jews. For matters of fact are more material to direct one in the right understanding of a practice, than these arguments from the reason of the thing, which may I see be bandied to and fro eternally. Had you any other argument from *Mr. B.*?

P. He bade me consider how many absurdities do follow by consequence from the Antipædobaptists' opinion: as, if an infant cannot be a Church member, or one of the Church; then Christ in his infancy was out of his own Church, neither head nor part of it. He bade me imagine *St. Peter*, when he exhorted his nation to turn Christians, speaking thus to them: " You and your children have been hitherto in covenant; but now if ye will believe in Christ, you yourselves shall have the privileges of the covenant in a higher degree; but your children shall be in no better condition than the Pagan world, out of any Church-covenant;" and so that their coming into a better condition put their children into a worse. That Christ came to dispossess infants of their covenanted right. That if Christ were now on earth, and we brought an infant to him; he would receive and embrace him: and he will now receive such into his kingdom of heaven. But if we bring him to be admitted into his Church, or mystical body, he will reject him for his incapacity. That he that has now his angel in heaven beholding* the face of God, is not worthy to have his guardian or sponsor in the Church on earth. That in so many families† mentioned in Scripture to have been baptized (such an one and all his) there were no children. That all the Christian world should be in an error, Protestants, Greek Church, all the national Churches, in the world: and they only in the right. May we not say with *St. Paul*, *1 Cor. xiv. 36.* *What! came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?* Or as he says, chap. xi. 16. *If any man*

* Matt. xviii. 10.

† Acts xii. 15, 35. 1 Cor. i. 16.

seem to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.

A. Those consequential proofs of a thing are in doctrines of morality, &c., of good use. But you know the Antipædobaptists say; that in a sacrament of positive institution we are to expect direct orders, and are to keep close to the letter.

P. They are in this respect the most unfair arguers in the world. When we produce the positive institution, "Disciple all the nations, baptizing them," they cannot deny but, in the literal and grammatical sense, infants are part of the nations as well as kings, &c. (who are no more particularly named than infants are;) and when we bring Christ's positive determination, *No person that is not born of water can enter, &c.*, they own that infants are persons; but when they come with their proofs by consequence from other places, that we must in all reason except infants. And yet when we use the same method in answering any place that they can bring, then consequences are nothing. Can they think that God meant that in reading his word, we should supersede all use of our own understandings?

For baptism itself, indeed, to be a Christian Sacrament, there was need of an express precept: but for the subject of it, we may argue by parity of reason, that those who formerly were admitted to it, may be now. The resurrection is a fundamental: yet Christ provided it* by a consequence. The alteration of the day of Sabbath is a matter of *positive* worship; yet we use consequences in proving it; and those more liable to exception (if we would cavil) than the baptism of infants.

But to come nearer to this very matter, the fit subjects of baptism; St. Peter thought that Gentiles, unless they were circumcised, were not fit subjects of baptism. Now the way that he was convinced, in *Acts x.* was not by any positive order, or express words: "Baptize this *Cornelius*;" or "Baptize Gentile men, though uncircumcised." But when he was told that they were no longer *unclean*, ver. 28, and saw the Holy Spirit come on them, he concluded by consequence, ver. 37, *Can any one forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit, &c.* He went by this rule; one that is capable of the ends of baptism, should be baptized. So we say: the children of Christians are not *unclean*, but capable of several of the ends of baptism; and conclude (though not from these only) that they are not to be denied water. Mr. Tombs himself says,† "If it should be made known to us that infants are sanctified, I should not doubt but that they are to be baptized: remembering the saying of St. Peter." Meaning this saying.

A. It cannot be denied but St. Peter argued here by consequences. But I believe that will happen to me, which has often happened to me; when I have at any time heard or read such reasons as these of yours, I have been for the present moved, and in-

* Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

† Exercitation, page 24.

clined to return to my old opinion of Infant Baptism. But when I come again to reading of the Scripture itself, and find there the tenour of baptism generally to run thus;—*Repent and be baptized,* —*He that believeth and is baptized*—*Baptized, confessing their sins* —*If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized*—then, methinks, I see plainly that infants have nothing to do with it. And then the answer which the Pædobaptists do give to this, is so groundless and precarious, that it turns my stomach. They distinguish and say; “Baptism is of two sorts, Adult Baptism and Infant Baptism: these places speak of Adult and not Infant Baptism.” But when we say, “where then are the places that speak of the other?” they can produce none. If I should maintain that infants may receive the communion, and you should confute me with that Scripture, *Let a man examine himself and so eat, &c.* and I should distinguish, “Communicants are of two sorts, adult communicants, and infant communicants,” would you not say that I begged the question? Adult Baptism: why, that is all the baptism that the Scripture any where sets forth.

P. If you say thus, (and I know that many Antipædobaptists do with a broad assurance say so; but if you say thus,) then you must say that all the places of Scripture which I have now produced, and others which others do produce, do signify nothing at all to the matter. And to say that, unless you could disprove them, is either begging the question, or denying the conclusion, when you cannot overthrow the premises.

A. I did not design to undervalue your reasonings. But you cannot deny that the history of the baptisms in Scripture runs with those clauses which I mentioned.

P. It is true, for the most part. But you do not seem to consider the state of those times, and of the people then. They were all of them people and nations that had had no Gospel or Christian Baptism before. In such a state of things, the first and main work was to persuade the adult persons to believe the Gospel: and that order of words was in that case necessary, “preach it to them: he that believes it, and is baptized, shall be saved.” For those people must be baptized after they were taught; having had no fathers that believed the gospel, to baptize them into it before. In the case I put before, if circumcision instead of baptism had been appointed, yet in sending Apostles to these people, our Saviour could hardly have expressed it after any other manner than thus: “Go proselyte the nations, circumcising them; he of them that believes the Gospel, and is circumcised, shall be saved.” And the history of their success would have run much as it does now: “Such a heathen man, or such a number of them in such a city, upon such preachings, and arguments, repented, confessed their sins, believed with all their heart, and were circumcised.” And yet all this is no argument that they should not, or did not circumcise their children.

A. I confess that in such a state of things, the converting and

baptizing the grown persons was the principal work, and that there was more occasion for mentioning that, both in the commission and in the history, than the baptizing of the infants. But methinks there would have been some mention of the infants (one at least) as baptized, if they had been generally baptized; when at some places it might have come in naturally, that the context does seem to require it, if so it had been true. And in *Acts viii. 12.* *They were baptized both men and women.* Here one word added [*and children*] would have ended all this dispute. Can we think that God would have suffered such an omission of one word in the recital, which would have been of such use for the quiet of future ages? this would not have swelled the book. For that, I know, is your pretence, that in a history, which must be short, the particular things that were of course, could not be all set down.

P. We are not to give rules how the Scripture should have been expressed. In many other controversies, as well as this, a few words added to to the text might (as we should think) have ended the dispute. But we see the contrary: for baptism itself is plainly expressed, and so is the other sacrament; and yet you see a world of people in *England* deny them both. God might, for aught we know, leave some things more difficult to be traced, that we might be under the necessity of studying his word, and the nature of his covenant to us therein declared, more frequently and attentively. There must be heresies, *St. Paul* says, that they which are approved may be made manifest. We are thankfully to take his word as it is: and to follow that sense of it, which, upon a diligent search and weighing of the whole, seems to us his true meaning; whether set down expressly, or gathered by good consequence.

A. You speak piously: we must do so. But that is a reason against our taking Infant Baptism to be his true meaning, that there are no plain examples of it in his word. That which you urge of households baptized; is not a *certain* one. And the other, of some children of the Christians at *Corinth* mentioned by *St. Paul* to have been baptized (as you interpret it) is an *obscure* one.

P. It is obscure to us now, only for this reason: it is not common with us now to use the word *sanctified* for (*baptized*) but it was in those times a very ordinary use of it. I am told, that it is not so little as an hundred times, that *St. Austin*, for one, when he is to speak of persons baptized, expresses it (*sanctified*.) as you saw he did in the passage I recited to you. And *Mr. Walker** has taken the pains to produce quotations out of the New Testament, and almost all the ancient Christian writers, to show that it was a common phrase with them to say *sanctified* instead of *baptized*, and *saints* instead of *baptized Christians*. If you have a conscientious desire to understand the true meaning of a Scripture passage, you must be at the pains to satisfy yourself by reading such quotations:

* *Modest Plea for Infant Baptism, Chap. xxix.*

else, if a word in the Scripture times signified one thing, and in our common use another thing, mistakes will be unavoidable. I profess to you sincerely, that I am now fully persuaded that that is the true sense of the place ; though at first it seemed as new to me, as it does now to you. It must have been some *visible holiness* of the children from which St. *Paul* draws an argument to satisfy the parents of the expediency of their cohabitation ; some known and customary privilege which such children had in the opinion and practice of that Church : and I know of no such that they could have but their baptism. Pray let us put this case : suppose you were not an Englishman, but a foreigner, and beginning to learn the English language, and did meet in some English book with this passage ; "Such a man's children are christened." The word *christened* being not used in Scripture, and having no parallel to it in the Latin language, nor in several others, you might be to seek for the meaning of it. What must you do in that case ?

A. Why, I must ask somebody that was more conversant in the English language and customs, what that word signified, and what was the use of it among the English ; and they would tell me, that *christened* signified *made a Christian* ; and that the use of it among the English, is to stand as another word for *baptized*.

So that it is, *such a man's children are baptized*.

P. Just so : if you or I meet in St. *Paul's* epistles with this passage *now are your children saints* ; and know not what to make of it ; we must ask some minister or other person, that is more conversant in the ancient language and customs, and he would show us by forty instances in St. *Paul* himself, and a thousand, if need be, in other writers about that time, that the use of that word, *saints*, among the ancients, is to be as another word for *Christians*. They said ; *children made saints*, or made Christians ; and we, in analogy to it, say *children christened*, or made Christians ; and the meaning both of the one and the other is *baptized*.

A. Then I also, it seems, must read those books. But pray tell me, to how many years do you reckon the history of the *Acts of the Apostles* does reach ?

P. From Christ's ascension to St. *Paul's* first imprisonment at *Rome*. It is much about thirty years.

A. The Christians must have had many thousands of children born to them in that space of time.

P. No doubt of it. And you think, I suppose, because none of them are registered in the *Acts* to have been baptized in infancy, that they were not baptized in infancy.

A. That seems to me an argument.

P. Well. Hold fast to that argument. And we will put the case for once, that the instances which I brought from the *Acts*, of households baptized, and the other, of the Corinthians' children, do prove nothing. And then I ask you this question : Do you think that those thousands of children were ever baptized at any time of their life at all ?

A. I suppose that as they grew to years of discretion they were baptized.

P. And yet there is no such thing registered.

A. Let me see. Were none of those men whose baptism is recited in the *Acts*, the sons of Christians?

P. Not one; if those households that we read to have been baptized, had no children in them. And if you conclude that none of those thousands were baptized in infancy, because it is not mentioned; and I conclude that they were not baptized at age, because that is not mentioned either; the Quakers and Socinians, who hold that when the parents or masters of families are baptized, there is no need that their children or posterity ever after should be baptized, but that all use of baptism may cease in a Christian nation, will take our conclusion, that they were not baptized at all.

A. Rather than they should do that, I would grant, that there were children in the households that were baptized; and that the Corinthian infants were baptized.

P. I hope you will be serious in a thing that affects your conscience so much as you say this does. And I hope also that you will not espouse a principle which must establish the error of those grossly deluded people.

A. It seems to many, that the Protestant Episcopal Church itself has given up the cause to the Antipædobaptist: when in the Catechism they (speaking of baptism in general) do own, that there is required of persons to be baptized, faith and repentance; and that after this is established in the general, what they say afterwards of infants baptized on a promise of these, comes too late.

P. There is no doubt, but that all baptism whatsoever is on a covenant; as, of the kingdom of heaven to be given on God's part, or faith and repentance on the baptized person's part; only with this difference as to infants and adults, namely, that these conditions are required to be performed *at present* of the adult; of infants, when they are, on account of age, capable of them. And this is all the Church means, namely, that both adult persons and infants are baptized on the same covenant, which ought to be declared at the baptism.

A. Why then did they not express it more distinctly in the answer there given, and say, "of adult persons is required faith, &c. at present; of infants, if they live?"

P. Before the rise of any enemies to a doctrine, men are apt to be unguarded, and not so distinct in their expressions about it. Now at the time of composing this catechism, there was never an Englishman of their opinion, as the author of the aforesaid *History of Infant Baptism* has shown.

A. Let us come to the second thing, which Mr. B. told you was so useful to give light in this matter; namely, the practice of the primitive Christians, who lived so nigh the times of the Apostles, that they must needs know whether infants were baptized in the Apostles' time or not. If I could any way come by a true account

of the practice of those ancient times, I should be much swayed by it; since these men could, by a little inquiry, know, with ease and certainty, the matter of fact about which we are in the dark; as we Englishmen cannot but know what was done in England in Queen ELIZABETH's time, in a practice so public and notorious. And since our question is now about a matter of fact, (what the Apostles did in this case of infants,) let some people say what they will in slighting of human authority, it never can, nor never shall, sink into my head, but that they whose fathers or grandfathers lived in the Apostles' time, must know what the Apostles did in this matter. And where the Scripture is short or doubtfully expressed, these men's books are, it seems, larger; so that one would think that learned men might be agreed concerning the practice of the times I now speak of. But I find so much contrariety in the accounts given, that there must be, on one side or on the other, great disingenuity used by them. I wish I were able to read the books myself, I would certainly give a true account, of which side soever I were. You, I perceive are confident that the ancient practice was wholly on your side, and some books that I have read do give the account so. But then others bring in those ancient fathers speaking all on the other side. What verdict can one give upon such contrary evidence?

P. I am afraid you have read *Danvers*. That book did me once a great deal of hurt.

A. And I thought it did me a great deal of good. For it leads one through all the first centuries with quotations, showing, that Adult Baptism only was then in use.

P. You must of necessity read Mr. Baxter's *Confutation of the strange Forgeries of Mr. H. Danvers*. Or, Mr. Wills's two books on that subject: with his *appeal* to the Antipædobaptists themselves, that they ought to renounce such a man. Or, Mr. Whiston: or, *The History of Infant Baptism*. You will find that book (which has been so magnified and handed about among those people, and has misled several of them) to be a great shame and discredit to their cause. And in this respect, I may say, that afterwards it did me good too: for it gave me an aversion to that cause which was thought to need such forging and perverting of testimonies, as even the Papists do seldom use.

A. I shall judge of that, when I read the book you speak of. But I must own to you my suspicion, whether that quotation you brought just now, as out of *Justin Martyr*, be genuine, where he speaks of some Christian's of his acquaintance that were then seventy years old, and had been baptized in their childhood.

P. The word used by *Just'in*, is not the word itself, (baptized,) but (discipled, or made disciples) as I rehearsed it. It is as I told you, the same word that is used by St. Matt. xxviii. 19, *Disciple the nations, baptizing, &c.*

A. That seems to me much as one. For our reason why infants cannot be baptized is, because they cannot be discipled. Nor do I

see what *Justin* could mean by the infants being *discipled to Christ*, but their being baptized. But the reason of my questioning whether it be genuine is, because I have used to mind how early any of the quotations are, that are brought for Infant Baptism, and I do not remember that they brought any so early. For *Justin* wrote that *Apology* in the year after Christ's birth, 140, as I remember; that is within 40 years of the death of some of the last apostles: and 70 years, reckoned back from that time, do reach in the midst of the Apostles' time, and come within 36 years of our Saviour's death.

P. The quotation is genuine, (as Mr. *B.* assured me,) and the book unquestioned. You may not have met with it before. We are beholden to Mr. *Dorrington** for observing a passage which so many before him had overlooked.

A. Some other passages of antiquity that you have mentioned, I will remember and examine. Especially that of those men that say, they never heard of any Christians that did not baptize infants. Did Mr. *B.* tell you of any more?

P. Yes. He gave me an account out of the four first centuries. And in the first of them (which is the age of Christ and his Apostles) there are, besides the book of Scripture, but two or three short pieces left. They are on other subjects, and have no discourse directly about infants. But they speak of original sin, with which we are born; and one of them (who wrote before St. *John*) mentions the necessity of Baptism to all persons, in order to entrance into God's kingdom, as a known Christian doctrine at that time. For he says, none can come there *without the seal*; and that *that seal is water*.

In the second, there are also but few books left. Yet of those few, what *Justin* says, you have heard: and he discourses moreover of baptism being to us instead of circumcision: and of original sin, &c. And *Irenaeus*, who lived thirty years after *Justin*, reckoning up the several sorts of persons that are *by Christ born again unto God*, mentions infants expressly among them. And the words (born again) do with him and all other writers (and *Justin* for one) signify baptism as peculiarly as the word (Christening) does with us.

A. I do not see how infants can be said to be *born again* in any other sense.

P. You observe right. In the third century *Tertullian*, (year after the Apostles 102,) who was much given to singular opinions, and opposed the received practices in many things, disputes against the custom of baptizing infants, virgins, young widows, &c. (at least except in danger of death.) I counted this testimony to be as good an evidence for Infant Baptism as any: for he so gives his reasons and opinion against the custom, as that one plainly per-

* *Vindication of the Church.*

ceives by his words that it was then actually the custom to baptize them.

Origen, ten years after, does in several places speak of Infant Baptism, as a known and undoubted practice: and (in one of them) as having been ordered by the Apostles.

A. If that were a known thing at that time, that the Apostles ordered so, *Tertullian* must have been a madman to oppose it.

P. It is probable he did not know it. He lived in a country in *Africa*, where no Apostle ever came, nor nigh it. But *Origen* lived near *Judea*, and had been born of Christian parents, and so might know it better. And St. *Ambrose* and St. *Austin* do affirm the same thing, that the Apostles practised and ordered it. About forty years after *Origen*, one *Fidus*, a country bishop, sent a scruple of his to St. *Cyprian*, and sixty-six bishops that were occasionally assembled—"Whether the baptism of an infant must not always be on the eighth day after his birth, because circumcision was so?" They send him a letter in answer, "That his scruple is vain; that the child may (and must if there be danger of death) be baptized sooner; and speak of the refusal of it as dangerous to the soul's health of the child." This was about 150 years after the Apostles; and some of these sixty-six bishops must be supposed to be 70 or 80 years old themselves: which reaches to half the space; and it appears, by their words, that not one of them made any doubt of Infant Baptism.

A. I remember that letter: but *Danvers* would have it to be spurious.

P. There is not a piece in all antiquity that can more certainly be proved to be genuine; for St. *Hierom* and St. *Austin* do very frequently quote passages out of it.

A. What, to confirm Infant Baptism?

P. No. I told you before that you never heard of any one that denied that: but to confirm the doctrine of original sin, which the *Pelagians* denied, though they owned Infant Baptism.

As for the next century, it is endless to repeat their sayings; but I have here a note of their names. The council of *Eliberis* (year after the Apostles 205) *Optatus* 260. *Greg. Nazianzen* 260. *St. Ambrose* 274. *Siricius* 284. St. *Austin* 290. *Paulinus* 293. Council of *Carthage* 297. Another 300. Another 401. *Innocentius* 302.

A. Hold. Was not that Pope *Innocent*?

P. Yes.

A. *Danvers* says, he was the first that decreed infants to be baptized.

P. How true that is you may guess by what I have rehearsed. And St. *Austin* (before *Innocent* was Pope) writes, "that it was not decreed in any council, but had been ever in use." And that "no Christian man of any sort had ever denied it to be useful."

A. Go on with your names.

P. No. Here I will give you the note—There are a great many

more of them. They do all of them (some in several places of their works, St. *Austin* in above 1000 places) show by their words, that infants were baptized in their times: and that without controversy. There is not one man of them that pleads for it, or goes about to prove it, as a thing denied by any Christian, except those that denied all water-baptism.

A. Were there, then, any Quakers in those days?

P. There were some heretics that denied all baptism. But it was only some of the grossest and most enormous ones, and such as denied the Scriptures also.

A. And is there no author in all this space of time that speaks against Infant Baptism, but only that *Tertullian*?

P. Not one among those that owned any baptism at all.

A. Nor one that says that it was the custom of some churches to baptize only the adult?

P. No such thing.

A. Then (if I find what you say to be true) I will never believe *Danvers's* book any more. For he quotes several authors of these times to say: "That in the eastern Church they baptized only the adult." But then in a postscript he corrects that: and for *eastern* he says we must read *western*. And if it be true of neither of them, how gross is that?

But for the several sects that were in those times, *Novatians*, *Donatists*, &c., and for the *Britons* he makes a pretence. You say St. *Austin* knew of no sect that denied Infant Baptism. Had St. *Austin* any great knowledge of the sects that were or had been? You find he was ignorant that *Tertullian* had spoken against it.

P. He had so good a knowledge that he wrote a book of all the sects that were then, or have been, (he reckons eighty-eight, and their several tenets,) and of the *Novatians* and *Donatists* writes largely: but not a word of their denying Infant Baptism.

But it had been *Pelagius's* interest (being so hard pressed with that argument: "Why are infants baptized, if they have no sin?") to have found out some that deny it if he could. And yet he also declares, as I told you, that he never heard of any. And he was a *Briton* born, but lived most part of his time at *Rome* and *Jerusalem*, and so must need have heard of them, if there had been any.

A. Where may I find the passages of the authors named in your note, and the rest that you refer to?

P. If you will read them at large, and in their order of time, (which I think is better than reading of scraps,) you may see them in a book called, *The History of Infant Baptism*. That writer pretends to little more than the mere pains of collecting them; but he has done them at large, and in the author's own words, and referred to the book and chapter whence they are copied.

A. Do these fathers seem to have considered those things which the Antipædobaptists do now use as reasons against the baptizing of infants; as that they have no sense of the thing, no faith, &c.

P. Yes. As appears in the discourse they have about the godfather's professing in the name of the child, that he does renounce, believe, &c. Where they confess that the child has not in any proper sense, faith, &c., but that it is only the godfather's declaring in the name of the child, that part of the covenant which the child is bound to believe and perform, if he live. So far are they from thinking this a reason against the baptizing of them.

A. Then they used godfathers in those times too?

P. Yes. Your own friend *Tertullian* (year after the Apostles 100) speaks of them as being then in use where he speaks of the other. And so do many of the rest.

A. But if there was no church, sect, or society, that renounced Infant Baptism; there seems to have been a great many particular Christians that let their children grow up unbaptized. For the Antipædobaptists bring many instances of emperors, as *Constantine*, &c., and many other men, as *Austin*, &c., that had Christian parents, and yet were baptized at full age. And here (excuse me if I deal freely with you) I can prove the contrary of what you have said. You say St. *Austin* never had heard of any Christian of our opinion, it is plain that his own father was of this opinion. I have myself read his book of Confessions; where he, in the ninth book, tells us how he was baptized at his own desire, being about thirty years old.

P. I have seen fourteen such instances brought: but I have seen thirteen of them shown to be mistakes, or to fail of proof; and the fourteenth proved to be a disputable case. But none of them more palpable mistakes than those two you mention. Did not you read in those books of St. *Austin*, that his father was a heathen, and did not turn Christian till a little before his death?

A. I did not mind any such thing.

P. Then when you read them again, mind what he says, in the first book, ch. ii., second book, ch. iii., ninth book, ch. ix., you will find what I say to be true. And for *Constantine*, do you not remember that he was the first Christian emperor?

A. Yes. Every one has heard of that.

P. Do you think that the first Christian emperor had a Christian emperor for his father?

A. Was his father emperor?

P. Yes. *Constantius Chlorus*. He died at *York*, possessed of the imperial dignity. He died a heathen.

A. Then what makes people write such bulls? I think that after the fourth century the Antipædobaptists do confess that Infant Baptism did generally prevail.

P. Yes. Mr. *Tombs* says, "that St. *Austin's* authority carried it in the following ages, almost without control." Which is hard, when St. *Austin* professes solemnly, that he never heard of any one in his time, or ever before, that opposed it.

A. But hark ye. Did not these ancient Christians give the communion to infants, as well as baptism?

P. No. None of the most ancient. In St. Cyprian's time there was a custom of giving it in his Church to young boys or girls of about four or five years old. And afterwards mere infants received it in some Churches; but not till after the year 400, as far as I can find. I believe that Pope *Innocent*, whom *Duncers* makes the first decretor of Infant Baptism, was really the first that decreed that they must receive the communion.

A. In what manner do you find that these ancient Christians administered baptism to infants and others? By dipping? or by pouring water on the face?

P. By dipping, generally. But if the person were weak, so that going into the water might endanger his life; or in times of great haste, want of water, or other necessity, they gave it by putting water on the face.

A. Then they did not think dipping to be of the essence of Baptism, so as that a person baptized, by putting water on the face, should be accounted as not sufficiently baptized! Our Saviour in his command used only this word *baptize*. Now what did Mr. B. tell you was the proper signification and use of that word in other places of Scripture?

P. The word, to *baptize*, in Scripture, is used for any washing, whether in whole, or in part; whether in a sacramental way or on other occasions. And the sacramental washing is sometimes expressed by the word *baptize*, and sometimes by other words, that are used for common washing.

A. What places of Scripture did he bring, where the word *baptize* is used for any other washing than that of dipping?

P. Luke xi. 38. The washing of the hands is called the baptizing of the man. For where we read; *The Pharisee marvelled that he had not washed before dinner*. St. Luke's own words are; *that he was not baptized before dinner*. And so where we read; Mark vii. 4, *When they come from market, except they wash, they eat not*. St. Mark's own words are; *except they be baptized, they eat not*. Now this washing before dinner, was only the washing of the hands: as we see, Mark vii. 5, and that was by a servant's pouring water on the hands. He brought also several other places.

A. And where is the sacramental washing expressed by other words than are used for common washing.

P. Eph. v. 26. *The washing of water*. Tit. iii. 5. *The washing of regeneration*. Heb. x. 22. *Having our bodies washed*. The word here used in the original is not *baptizing*, but (Mr. B. assured me) the same that is used Acts xvi. 33, *He washed their stripes*. No man will think they were put into the water for that.

A. I shall be less anxious about this: partly because our Saviour has given us a rule, Matt. xii. 3, 4, 7. "that what is needful to preserve life, is to be preferred before outward ceremonies;" and partly because in the Protestant Episcopal Church any man may have his child dipped at Baptism if he will venture the life of his child.

But for the baptizing of infants, I shall consider, read, and confer on the several things you have mentioned: and what will be the result, I know not: but I am resolved to take your advice in conferring with our Curate, or some other Minister, before I determine on any alteration. For I find that they know many things that are useful to find out the true sense of a Scripture passage more than we do.

P. If you do so, and with an unprejudiced mind, I do not much doubt but that, by the grace of God, you will not only overcome all your scruples, but also be more confirmed in opinion of the validity of your baptism, and more thankful for the spiritual benefits conveyed to you by it, than ever you were before your doubting, as (I thank God) I am. There are many that were of our Church, who are now far gone in their new ways and become teachers in them, who wanted nothing but this to have kept them steady in the unity of the Church of Christ and of its doctrines.

Baptism of Infants.

The gentle Saviour calls
Our children to his breast;
He folds them in his gracious arms,
Himself declares them blest.

“Let them approach,” he cries,
“Nor scorn their humble claim;
“The heirs of heaven are such as these,
“For such as these I came.”

Gladly we bring them, LORD,
Devoting them to thee,
Imploring, that, as we are thine,
Thine may our offspring be.



RICHARD NELSON.

In the course of the summer, I had the pleasure of a visit from an old and valued friend, one of the most respectable merchants in the city of Bristol, (and this, in my opinion, is no small praise.)

We were discussing one day the subject of National Schools, their merits and demerits. He was pleading strenuously for them; and to confirm his arguments, "I will mention," said he, "a circumstance which happened to me when I was in this part of the world about eleven or twelve years ago. I was travelling on a coach somewhere between Sheffield and Leeds, when we took up a lad of fourteen or fifteen years of age; a rough country-looking boy, but well mannered and of an intelligent countenance.

"I found upon conversation with him, that he belonged to a National School in the neighbourhood, which he was, he said, on the point of leaving. This gave me occasion to ask him various questions, which he answered with so much readiness and vivacity, yet without any self-conceit in his manner, that when the coach stopped (I think it was at Barnsley) for a short time, I took him with me into a bookseller's shop, and desired him to select some book which I might give him as a testimony of my approbation. After looking at a few which the bookseller recommended, he fixed on a 'Selection from Bishop Wilson's Works,' whose name, he said, he had often heard. He begged me to write his name in it, which I did, and we parted with mutual expressions of good-will; and I will be bold to prophesy that that boy (or young man as he must now be, if he is still alive) is giving by his conduct stronger testimony in favour of the National School System than a thousand of your speculating philosophers can bring against it."

"Well," said I, "you are apt to be sanguine in your views, but as I must confess they are very often right, so I will hope you may not have been deceived in this instance.

It so happened that two or three days after this conversation we were taking a walk together, and discussing various topics, such as the present state of things might well suggest, when we met a young man, a neighbour of mine, a mason, who detained us two or three minutes, while he asked my directions about some work he was doing for me.

After he was out of hearing,—“That,” said I, “is one of the most respectable young men I know. Soon after I came here, more than four years ago, he married a young woman of a disposition similar to his own; and they live in that cottage that you see there, to the right of that row of beeches.”

“I see it, I believe,” said he, hardly looking the way I pointed, and not altogether seeming pleased at having our conversation thus interrupted.

“He has two or three little children, and I believe sometimes it goes hard with them, as in the winter work is short hereabouts, and he does not like beating about far from home. I sometimes tell him he ought to look farther; but he is so fond of his home, his wife and children, that I verily think he would rather live on potatoes seven days in the week with them, than have meat and beer by himself. And besides, I know he does not relish the companions he must work with at the town. However, on the whole, they do tolerably well, as they have a garden of a fair size, and he never spends an unnecessary penny.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said he; “but we were talking about the value of an apostolical succession in the ministry, were we not? and of the great ignorance and neglect now prevailing on the subject.”

“We were,” said I; “but to tell you the truth, though I have bestowed considerable attention on the subject, and examined the various opinions which have been put forth on it, yet I have scarcely learned so much hereon from the works of the learned theologians, as I have from repeated conversations with that very young man we just now met.”

“You surprise me,” said he.

“You may be surprised, but it is however true, and, (if you have no objection,) I will tell you how it was.”

“By all means,” he answered.

“When I first came to the parish I looked about for some person to take charge of the Sunday School, as the master was old, and so deaf as to be unequal to the work. I was recommended to apply to Richard Nelson, (that is the man’s name,)”—Here my friend interrupted me, saying, “Richard Nelson? why, now I remember, that was the very name of the boy I travelled with.”

“Indeed!” said I, “then doubtless it is the same person: for his age will agree with your account very well, and I know he was bred at — National School.” “Well,” said he, “I am quite delighted to find myself a true prophet in this instance.” “Perhaps,” said I, “you will be still more pleased, when you have heard all I have to tell you: you will find that your little present was by no means thrown away.” “Go on,” said he, “I am all attention.”

I was telling you, I believe, that I requested Nelson to become master of the Sunday School. After some little hesitation, he declined my offer, under the plea that he could not give constant and regular attendance; though he was willing to attend occasionally,

and render what assistance he could. So it was arranged that the old master should still remain ; and I afterwards discovered that an unwillingness to deprive him of the little emolument,* was Nelson's real reason for declining my offer. As the Sunday School is nearly three quarters of a mile from my house, in a direction beyond Nelson's, along the Beech Walk, as we call it, it frequently happened that we joined in company as we went to and fro. We generally talked over such subjects as had reference to the School, or to the state of religion in general : and, amongst other topics, that on which you and I are conversing,—the authority of Christian ministers. I remember it was on the following occasion that the subject was started between us. I thought I had observed one Sunday, that he was making the boys of his class, (our School professes to be on the Bell System,) that he was, I say, making his boys read the nineteenth and some other of the Thirty-nine Articles relating to the ministerial office : and that afterwards he was explaining and illustrating them, after his usual manner, by referring them to suitable parts of Scripture. On our walk homewards. I enquired if I was right in my conjecture. He said, Yes : and that, in the present state of things, he could not help thinking it quite a duty to direct the minds of young persons to such subjects. And on this and many subsequent occasions, he set forth his opinions on the matter, which I will state to you, as far as I can remember, in his own words.

"My good mother," he said, "not long before her death, which happened about half-a-year before I came to live here, said to me very earnestly one day, as I was sitting by her bed side,—' My dear Richard, observe my words : never dare to trifling with GOD ALMIGHTY.' By this I understood her to mean, that in all religious actions we ought to be very *awful*, and to seek nothing but what is right and true. And I knew that she had always disapproved of people's saying, as they commonly do, 'that it little matters what a man's religion is, if he is but sincere ;' and 'that one opinion or one place of worship is as good as another.' To say, or think, or act so, she used to call 'Trifling with God's truth :' and do you not think, sir, (addressing himself to me,) that she was right."

"Indeed I do," said I.

"And," he said, "I was much confirmed in these opinions by constantly reading a very wise, and, as I may say to you, precious book, which a gentleman gave me some years ago, whom I met by chance when I was going to see my father in the infirmary. It is called a selection from Bishop Wilson's Works, and there are many places in it which shew what his opinions were on this subject ; and

* This has reference to an English custom. In many small villages and hamlets, the services of a band of voluntary Catechists, such as those who conduct our Sunday Schools, are not obtainable. A Master is there paid a small salary, as in the case of an ordinary Charity School.

I suppose, sir, there can be no doubt that bishop Wilson was a man of extraordinary judgment and piety."

"He has ever been considered so," I answered.

"I could not think much of any one's judgment or piety either, who should say otherwise," he replied; "and what Bishop Wilson says, is this, or to this effect:—That 'to reject the government of Bishops, is to reject an ordinance of God.'"^{*}

That "our salvation depends, under God, upon the ministry of those whom JESUS CHRIST and the HOLY GHOST have appointed to reconcile men to God."[†]

That "the personal failings of the ministers do not make void their commission."[‡]

That "if the Unity of the Church is once made a light matter, and he who is the centre of Unity, and in CHRIST's stead, shall come to be despised, and his authority set at nought, then will error and infidelity get ground; JESUS CHRIST and His Gospel will be despised, and the kingdom of Satan set up again here as well as in other nations."[§] With many other expressions like these.

"And yet, Sir," he continued, "the gentleman who lives over there, (pointing to a great house in sight four or five miles off down the valley,) who is said to be a person of much learning, and who does a great deal of good, he does not take the matter in the same light. For he told a man of——whom I was working with, that if a person preached what was right and good, that was the best sign of his being ordained a minister, without the ceremony of laying on a Bishop's hand upon his head. And the man that told me, very much admired the opinion, in regard (he said) of its being so very *liberal*, or some such word. Though I confess I could not exactly see what there was so much to admire. Because, if the opinion were true, it was good, and if it were false, it was bad, equally as much (to my thinking) whether it were called liberal or bigotted."

"Doubtless you were right," said I. "And," he proceeded, "it seemed to me, (and I told the man so,) like going round and round in a wheel, to say, If he is God's minister, he preaches what is good; and if he preaches what is good, he is God's minister. For still the question will be, what is right and good? and some would say one thing and some another; and some would say there is nothing right nor good at all in itself, but only as seems most expedient to every person for the time being. So for my own satisfaction, and hoping for God's blessing on my endeavour, I resolved to search the matter out for myself as well as I could. My plan was this. First, to see what was said on the subject in the Church Prayer Book, and then to compare this with the Scriptures; and if, after all, I could not satisfy myself, I should have taken the liberty of consulting you, Sir, if I had been here, or Mr. ——, who was the minister at ——, where I came from."

"Yours was a good plan," I said; "but I suppose you had forgotten that the chief part of the Church Services which relate to these subjects, is not contained in the part of the Prayer Book which we commonly use."

"I was aware of that," he answered, "but my wife's father had been clerk of —— parish, and it so happened that the church-warden had given him a large Prayer Book in which all the Ordination Services were quite perfect, though the book was ancient, and in some parts very ragged. This book my wife brought with her when we came here, and indeed she values it very highly on account of her poor father having used it for so many years. Thus, you see, Sir, with the Bible and Prayer Book, and, (as I hoped,) God's blessing on my labours, I was not, as you may say, unfurnished for the work."

"Indeed, Richard, you were not," I replied.

"Well then," he proceeded, "I first observed, that the church is very particular in not allowing any administration of the Sacraments, or any *public* service of ALMIGHTY God to take place, except when there is one of her Ministers to guide and take the lead in the solemnity. Thus not only in the administration of Baptism, and of the LORD's Supper, but in the daily Morning and Evening Prayers, in the Public Catechising of Children, in the Solemnization of Marriage, in the Visitation of the Sick, and in the Burial of the Dead;—in all these cases the Christian congregation is never supposed complete, nor the service perfect, unless there be also present a minister authorized to lead the devotions of the people. And yet I also observed that neither minister nor people, not even with the leave of the Bishop himself, had power or authority given them to alter or vary from the Rules set down in the Prayer Book. And often have I thought how well it would be if Ministers and people too would be more careful to keep to the rules."

"Yes," said I, "it is too true; we are all to blame."

"But, he proceeded, taking a small Prayer Book out of his pocket, "the question I had next to ask was,—who are meant by these Ministers so often referred to in the Church Service. To this question I found a general answer in the Twenty-third, Twenty-sixth, and Thirty-sixth Articles; where the judgment of the Church is thus plainly given:—

1st "That it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the public Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same."

2ndly. That those *are* lawfully called and sent, who are chosen and called to the work by men who have public authority given them in the Congregation to call and send Ministers into the LORD's vineyard."

3dly. That though sometimes evil men may have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments; yet, foras-

much as they do not the same in their own name but in CHRIST's, and do minister by His commission and authority, we may use their ministry with full hope of God's blessing."

4thly. "That whosoever are consecrated and ordained according to the Rites there prescribed, are rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordained."

"But here, Sir, I will take occasion to ask you whether it would not have been better, instead of calling the second order of Ministers Priests, to have used the word which is frequently found in the New Testament, applied to them, "Elders," or "Presbyters."

"Why," I said, "I have no doubt the wise and good men who framed the Prayer Book had a good reason for retaining the title of Priests. But in truth it is one of the very words you mentioned, only somewhat shortened by our forefathers in the pronunciation of it—Presbyter was made Prester, and that by degrees became Prest, or Priest."

"That," said he, "is very remarkable, and proves that we ought to enquire before we find fault. But to go on with what I was saying—I next proceeded to read over, and I assure you, Sir, I did it with great care, the three Services in our large Prayer Book—namely, for Consecration of Bishops, Ordaining of Priests, and Making of Deacons. And I must confess to you that I could not but greatly admire them; and at the same time feel much astonishment at two considerations which they brought to my mind."

"What were they, Richard?" I enquired.

"The one was," he said, "to think that after such a solemn dedication to the ministry, there should be such a thing as a careless or a wicked Clergyman. And yet, Sir, is it not also astonishing that after such a solemn dedication of ourselves as we all make to God in Baptism, there should be such a thing as a careless or a wicked Christian."

"So it is," I said, "when we judge others we condemn ourselves. But what was the other ground of your surprise?"

"Why, it was this; that there should be any doubt what the opinion of the Church is respecting the Christian Ministry. Comparing the Ordination Service with the Liturgy and Articles, it seems to me quite clear, that in the judgment of the Church, none can shew themselves duly authorized Ministers of CHRIST, who do not belong to one or other of the three orders, of Bishops, Priests, or Deacons.

"But, said I to myself, other Churches have erred, why may not this then be the misfortune of the Church of England also? and this very opinion may be one of her errors. You see then, Sir, the next thing I had to do was to consult the Scriptures on the subject, and (if it be not too bold in such a one as I to say so) to try the Prayer Book by the Bible."

"Your method was the best possible," I said. "But, if you please, do not use the expression, the Church of England, but the Church *in* England."

"Why indeed, Sir," said he, "perhaps it would be more proper. But to proceed with my enquiry. I first observed, that in the History of the Jews, as contained in the Old Testament, as well as in that of Christians in the New, the ALMIGHTY seems almost or quite always to have communicated His will to mankind through some chosen Minister; some one, whether it were angel or man, who could give suitable evidence of the authority by which he spoke or acted. But there seemed to me to be this great difference between Jews and Christians, in this as in other cases; that in the Jews' religion, all the rules and regulations were set down so plainly and distinctly, that no one could mistake their meaning; for instance, in the Levitical laws concerning the priesthood; of what family and tribe the Priests and High Priest should be, what their respective duties, and what their dress, &c. Whereas in the Christian religion, the rules and regulations, however important, and even necessary, are yet not so exactly set down. And I remember hearing a very good and wise Clergyman say in a Sermon at —— Church, that this is probably what St. James means, when he calls the Gospel 'a Law of Liberty:' namely, that its rules and directions are *not* so plainly set down, *on purpose*, that Christians might have freer space, (I remember that was his expression,) and opportunity, to exercise their Faith and Love for their Redeemer. And I have sometimes thought myself, that what St. Paul says about the difference between walking by faith and by sight, seems to suit the different cases of Jews and Christians. *They* walked by sight, *we* must walk by faith; and faith, in this world, we are told, can see but as through a glass darkly."

"It seems so," I said.

He proceeded.

"With this view I went on to examine the New Testament, expecting to find therein some *general* instruction respecting the institution and authority of Ministers in the Christian Church. But I did not expect that these rules should be as particular and distinct as those on the same subject in the Old Testament, any more than I should expect to find a command to Christians to observe the LORD's Day set down as distinctly as the command to observe the Sabbath was set down for the Jews. And yet, Sir, I suppose all will agree, that no one who wilfully neglects the LORD's Day can be a true Christian."

"There are strange opinions now afloat," said I; "and if many despise the LORD's Ministers, it is no wonder if many also despise the LORD's Day."

"Indeed, Sir," said he, "it is not to be wondered at. But to go on with my statement. On carefully perusing the New Testament History, I remarked that our LORD did not grant ministerial authority to His disciples in general, but first to twelve, and then to seventy; that of those twelve, one was among the wickedest of mankind, and that our LORD knew (*St. John vi. 64. xiii. 18.*) his character when he appointed him; that possibly some of those se-

venty also might be unworthy persons ; that our LORD, just before His departure, gave what may be called a fresh commission to His Apostles, which they should act upon after His ascension ; that after that event, the twelve Apostles were the leading persons in the Christian Church, having under them two orders or degrees, viz. Bishops (sometimes called Elders) and Deacons ; that this threefold division of Ministers in the Church lasted as far as the New Testament History reaches, the Apostles having set men over different Churches with Apostolical authority, to preside during their absence, and to succeed them after their decease. This sufficiently appears from places in St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus."

"Do you remember any of the passages," I asked him.

"I cannot," he said, "call to mind chapter and verse, but I have with me a little paper of memorandums which I use at the school, and which, if it be not too much trouble, I will thank you to look at."

The paper was as follows :—for I thought it well to copy what he had written into my pocket memorandum-book.

It appears that Timothy had authority at Ephesus to check false or unedifying Teachers. *1 Tim.* i. 3, 4 ;—to select persons proper to be ordained Bishops, iii. 1—7 ; and also Deacons, iii. 8—13.

That he should have particular regard to the Elders who rule well. v. 17.

That he should be cautious of receiving accusations against Elders. v. 22.

That if any [Elders] were convicted it was *his* duty to reprimand them publicly. v. 20.

That in his decisions he should be strictly impartial. ver. 21.

That he should be very cautious on whom he laid his hands. v. 22.

That Timothy was in a station, which even the rich and great might respect, vi. 17.

That Timothy had been ordained by St. Paul himself, once, if not twice. *2 Tim.* i. 6

That at his ordination or consecration there was something remarkable in the Sermon. *1 Tim.* iv. 14. i. 18.

That he was to commit what he had heard from St. Paul to faithful men, who should be able to pass it to others. *2 Tim.* ii. 2.

That Titus had authority to set in order what was wanting in the Cretan Church ; *Tit.* i. 5 : and to ordain Bishops in every city ; i. 5, 7.

That he was to be cautious whom he selected for this office. i. 6—9.

That he should rebuke false teachers sharply. i. 13.

That if Titus *himself* was a pattern of good works and a teacher of truth, *the whole Church* would gain credit. ii. 7, 8.

That he should rebuke with all authority. ii. 15.

That he should suffer no man to despise him. ii. 15.

That after one or two admonitions he should reject heretical persons. iii. 10.

"Now, Sir, it seems to me evident, from these and others similar passages, that there were certainly in the Church, *as far as the*

Testament History reaches, three different ranks or orders of Ministers, one above the other."

"It is plainly so," I said.

"But, said he, "there was one point which rather perplexed me, and I was some time before I could make out such an explanation of it as was satisfactory to myself."

"What was that," I asked.

"Why," said he, "it was this. I considered that any person to whom the Apostles granted apostolical authority, (Timothy, for instance,) was from that time higher than a Presbyter or Bishop, and yet could not properly be called an Apostle. What then could he be called? I at last remembered a place in Bishop Wilson's little book, which led me to reflect, that surely as there were Angels, (whether it might mean guardians, or heavenly messengers, or missionary Bishops, as we might say,) of the seven Churches in Asia,—so Timothy might have been called the Angel of the Ephesian Church; and Titus, of the Church of Crete; and the same in other cases. And it came into my thoughts, that, perhaps, after St. John's decease, whether out of humility, or because, (the Churches being settled,) the ministers need no longer be missionaries, the title of Apostles or Angels was laid aside, and that of Bishops limited to the highest of the three orders.

Thus I seemed to myself every where to have traced the three-fold order, down from the beginning of the Gospel; the authority and distinction peculiar to each being preserved, a difference in name only taking place.

Thus at first they were.....Apostles, Elders, Deacons.

After the decease of some of the

Apostles, or at least, while St.

John was yet living.....Angels, Bishops, Deacons.

At some period, after St. John's

decease.....Bishops, Priests, Deacons.

"I do not see how, what you have said, can be contradicted," I replied.

"But," he proceeded, "there is one thing I must, Sir, confess to you, and it is this;—that I have often said to myself, what a comfort it would be, if it had pleased God to preserve to us some few writings of the good men who lived close after the Apostles, that so we might have known their opinion on matters of this kind; and we might have known, too, by what names *they* distinguished the different orders of Ministers, one from another. For, surely, what they would think most proper in such cases, must be safest of all rules for us to follow; unless, (which is a thing not to be supposed,) *their* rules should be contrary to those of the Apostles, as set down in Scripture. So, Sir, I have often thought, if any such writings could be found, what a precious treasure they would be."

"What," said I, "Richard, did you never hear of those who are called the Apostolic Fathers: Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius?"

"I believe I have heard of them," he answered; "but I observed, that you, Sir, and other Clergymen, scarcely ever notice them in your Sermons; and the man I mentioned just now told me that Mr. Cartwright, who is the minister of the Independent Chapel at the Town, and who is reckoned to be a very learned man and an admired preacher,—that he should say in a Sermon, that the works of the Fathers were very imperfect, and their opinion not much to be trusted to."

"But," said I, "Richard, if a person, whose word you could take, were to shew you an old book written by persons who had seen our SAVIOUR; who had heard St. John and St. Paul preach, and had been well acquainted with them; should you not value such a book, and wish to know whether there was any thing in it, which could throw light on the history of those early times of the Church, and especially with reference to the subjects you and I have been now conversing on?"

"Indeed, Sir, I should," he said. "But if what Mr. Cartwright said is true, it is too much to expect that any such treasure should be found by us."

"No, Richard," I said, "it is not too much. The kind Providence of God has permitted some of the writings of those good men to be preserved to this day. And there is no more doubt that they *are* their genuine writings, than that Bishop Ken wrote the Evening Hymn, or Bishop Wilson that little book you like so much."

"If this is indeed as you say," he replied, "we have great reason to be thankful for such a proof of God's care for His Church. But I beg you, Sir, to tell me, whether there is any thing in these writings you speak of, which confirms what I have been venturing to state to you as my opinion gathered from Scripture, concerning the threefold distinction of Christian Ministers."

"Next Sunday," said I, "you shall see and judge for yourself."

As we came home from Church in the afternoon of the following Sunday, he reminded me of my promise; and I gave him a written paper, containing a few extracts, which I had translated from the works of the Apostolical Fathers, telling him, that I might possibly have made a mistake here and there in the rendering, but that he might depend on such being the general force and meaning of the passages.

The Extracts I gave him were the following:—

"Clement, with other my fellow labourers."—*Phil. iv. 3*

"Ignatius and the holy Polycarp, the Bishop of the Smyrnæans, had formerly been disciples of the holy Apostle John."—*Martyrdom of Ignatius.*

"The Apostles, preaching throughout countries and cities, used to appoint their first fruits, after they had proved them by the Spirit, to be

Bishops and Deacons of those who should hereafter believe."—*Clement to the Corinthians.*

"The Apostles knew that there will be dispute about the name of Bishoprick or Episcopacy, wherefore they appointed the aforementioned, and gave them authority beforehand, in order that if themselves should fall asleep, other approved men might succeed to their ministerial office."—*The same.*

"All of you follow the Bishop as JESUS CHRIST followed the FATHER; and the Presbytery as the Apostles; and reverence the Deacons as God's ordinance. Let no man do any of those things which pertain to the Church without the Bishop. He that honoureth the Bishop, is honoured of God; he that doeth any thing without the privity of the Bishop, doeth service to the Devil."—*Ignatius to the Smyrnæans.*

"Have regard to the Bishop, that God also may regard you. My soul for theirs who are subject to the Bishops, Elders, and Deacons; and may it be my lot to have a portion with them in God."—*Ignatius to Polycarp.*

"The Bishops who were appointed in the farthest regions are according to the will of JESUS CHRIST; whence it becometh you to go along with the will of the Bishop."—*Ignatius to the Ephesians.*

"That ye may obey the Bishop and the Presbytery, having your mind without distraction, breaking one bread."—*The same.*

Some indeed talk of the Bishop, yet do every thing without him: but such persons do not appear to me conscientious; on account of their congregations not being assembled strictly according to the commandment."—*Ignat. to the Magnesians.*

"I exhort you to be zealous to do all things in divine concord: the Bishop presiding in the place of God, and the Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles, and the Deacons, (in whom I most delight,) intrusted with the service of JESUS CHRIST."—*The same.*

"For as many as are God's and JESUS CHRIST's, these are with the Bishop."—*Ignat. to the Philadelphians.*

"Be ye earnest to keep one Eucharist, for the flesh of our LORD JESUS CHRIST is one, and there is one cup in the unity of His blood, one altar, as one Bishop, together with the Presbytery, and Deacons, my fellow-servants."—*The same.*

"Hold to the Bishop, and to the Presbytery, and Deacons. Without the Bishop do nothing."—*The same.*

"When you are subject to the Bishop as to JESUS CHRIST, ye appear to me as living not according to man's rule, but according to JESUS CHRIST."—*Ignat. to the Trallians.*

"He that without the Bishop, and Presbytery, and Deacon, doeth ought, that person is not pure in his conscience."—*The same.*

"Polycarp, and the Presbyters who are with him, to the Church of Gon, sojourning at Philippi."—*Polycarp to the Philippians.*

"Being subject to the Presbyters and Deacons, as to God and CHRIST."—*The same.*

Two or three weeks afterwards, as we were walking homewards after Evening Service, he gave me back the paper, with expressions of great satisfaction and thankfulness ; and added, that he blessed God for having led him to make the enquiry ; and that he was sure, if many religiously-disposed persons, who now think little of such matters, would turn their minds to them without partiality, they would fear to separate from a Church like ours, which, whatever may be its imperfections, is substantially pure in its doctrine, and in the Apostolical Succession of its Ministry.

"Sir," said he, "I am a poor hard-working man, as you know, but the interests of my soul and of those dear to me, are of as great importance in the sight of Almighty God, and ought to be to me also, as if my lot had been cast in a higher station. It is to me, therefore, no matter of indifference, (as many have told me it should be,) what is the truth on these great subjects ; but I am more and more sure that it is a Christian duty first to enquire into them, and, when we have found the truth, to act up to it, humbly but resolutely.

"The times are bad, I confess ; but yet, young though I am, I do not expect, as the world now goes, to see them much better.

"What our **Lord** said about iniquity abounding, and love growing cold, seems to be but too suitable to our present state. I have often thought it and said it, though I have seldom met with any one who would agree with me in the opinion.

"I have therefore determined, Sir, by God's grace, to look to myself, my wife, and children ; and not to trust the world to do us any good, either in time or in Eternity.

"And if by following **THE TRUTH** now, we shall all be together hereafter in the Society of Prophets, Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, you know then, Sir, we shall have nothing more to wish for, nothing more to fear ; every doubt will be satisfied, every difficulty removed. And I assure you, Sir, it is the very comfort of my life to spend a portion of every Sunday, in looking forward to that happy time."

"God bless you, Richard," said I, "as we parted at his garden gate." And, when I came home, I could not but fall on my knees and thank God for having given me such a Parishioner.

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RICHARD NELSON.

Part II.

"Ye hear in the Gospel the express words of our Saviour CHRIST, that except a man be born of water and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD. Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, where may be had."—*Office of Baptism for those of Riper Years.*

DURING the summer, I was called away to a distance from home, by the unexpected illness of a near relation, which became serious, and lasted so long as to keep me absent for two or three Sundays. It was early in summer, and it so happened that one of the Sundays was the eighth of June. Thinking over the first evening lesson for the day of the month, as I sat watching by my kinsman's bedside, I was forcibly struck by the awful way, in which it appears to impress upon men the duty of separating themselves in some way or other, from unbelievers. "Eat no bread, nor drink water, neither turn again by the way that thou camest;" that is, "however tired, hungry, and thirsty you may be, and however kind and pressing they may be, have nothing at all to say to them. do not even return the same road, but make yourself as strange among them as ever you can." Long and deeply, with my Bible in my hand, did I muse upon this history, and the more I thought the more I was convinced, putting every thing together, that such as I have said is its true moral and meaning. I must own, however, that the train of thought was not altogether agreeable to me. I could not disengage myself from an unpleasant, though not a very distinct conviction that this material part of piety, separation from the enemies of God, had not been sufficiently pressed on my people, in my course of parochial instruction. The thought came across my mind, "What if any of them now should go astray for want of due warning on that point, and should come to a bad end?" And I secretly determined with myself, in the silence of the sick room, that I would endeavour for the future to supply this great deficiency, and that until Church discipline can be restored again (which the Prayer Book teaches us to wish and pray for,) I would try to prevail on those who were most likely to be prevailed to act upon the principles of it, and establish something like it in their own houses: using a kind of holy reserve towards those who will not hear the Church. These thoughts occupied me that night during most of my waking hours; my patient happily sleeping soundly

and my anxiety about him of course growing less: and when towards morning I was relieved on my post as nurse, the same thoughts still haunted me in dreams. At last I settled into a sound slumber, and, as was not unnatural, overslept myself. I was awoken on the Monday morning, an hour after the usual time, by my friend's servant bringing a letter into my room, which I saw by the postmark came from my own parish, but I could not at all recollect the hand writing. I opened it eagerly, not knowing what to expect, and read as follows:

“Honoured and dear Sir,

“I make bold to trouble you with a few lines, as I find on calling at the Parsonage that Mr. Mason is not yet well enough for you to leave him: which a little troubled me, for I wanted to ask your kind advice on a matter of some consequence, and I could do it much more comfortably by word of mouth. As it is, I must try and state my case to you by letter, hoping that I shall be able to make it plain, and knowing that you will excuse other defects, which will be many. The thing, Sir, is this: you have seen something of my nephew, young Philip Carey, the bricklayer of Amdale. For I remember, when he had some work in our parish, he went to you to buy a Bible, and you had some talk with him, and named him to me afterwards, seeming rather pleased with him; and indeed he is a steady, good tempered lad, though I say it that should not say it. Well, Sir, that Bible was intended for a present, he would not tell me then to whom, but I afterwards found that he had given it to a young woman named Vane, who was in service, where he last worked: and in short, there was a talk among the people, which I as a kinsman was one of the last to hear, that they were very soon going to be married. I was not very much surprised at this: but I own to you, Sir, I was more vexed than some of our people can well account for. Not that I have any thing to say against the young woman's conduct; indeed I believe she has always borne a good character, and is, as the world goes, very respectable: but I knew very well that her father had been for many years unsettled in his thoughts on religion—more, as I believed, of a Baptist than any thing else: and I thought to myself, if Letitia (for that is her name) is not very different from her father, how can the Church's blessing go along with such an union? and without the Church's blessing, how can they expect to be happy? So I made it my business to see my nephew, and asked him quietly, if no scruple of this sort had ever come into his mind; and a good deal passed between us, which I need not at present tire you with. However, the upshot was, we parted good friends, but both of the same mind as when we met. And on the Sunday I walked over to Amdale, and called on my sister Lucy, Philip's mother (his father died last year,) and we had a long discourse, in which she seemed to think me strange and bigoted: but yet I hoped that what I had said would keep them from going on quite inconsiderately. So

much the more was I disappointed at receiving a note from my sister this morning, begging me to order my matters so as to be at Amdale church at 10 o'clock next Saturday, they having fixed on that day for the wedding, and wishing me to give the young woman away. I can see, they quite reckon upon it, and I fear they will be very much affronted should I refuse. I conclude they hardly thought me quite in earnest in what I said to them, But though it will be a great grief to me to have them look unpleasant at me (for next to my own family, I have always delighted in my sister's,) I seem to have made up my mind, unless you, Sir, should think differently, not to have any thing to do with this marriage ; and I cannot help thinking they will one day thank me for it. I shall not now intrude on you with my reasons ; but one line just to say yes or no would greatly oblige,

“Honoured and dear Sir,

“Your obliged and humble servant,

“RICHARD NELSON.”

When I had read this letter, though I was grieved to think that my friend Richard, who had always lived such a quiet life, and with whom I had sometimes talked of the great happiness we both enjoyed—a rare happiness in these times—of belonging, each of us, to a family undivided in religious opinions : though, I say, I was grieved to think of Richard's being thus disturbed, yet I was on the whole more pleased for the thing to have befallen him than if it had happened to any other man in the parish, for reasons which the reader will easily guess. I wrote to him as he desired, not a long letter, but such as to show him that I heartily approved of his principles, and trusted to his discretion for applying them in the most effectual way. While I stayed with my relation, I heard no more of the matter, but I thought of it day and night, and wondered how it would turn out. The middle of the next week, my relation having nearly recovered, I returned home ; and the first thing I did was to contrive a little job of walling, that I might have an excuse for sending to Richard Nelson. I saw at once, when he came into the room, that he had been going through a good deal ; he looked anxious, though very calm and cheerful. The following conversation, or something very like it, passed between us, after I had given my orders about the work :—

“And how goes on this wedding, Richard?”

“Pretty much as I expected, S'r : we have had a good deal to say to each other about it, I, and my sister, and Mr. Vane ; but though I spoke very plainly to them, they would not believe I was in earnest, till the very day before that intended for the marriage. And when they saw that I meant what I said, they were forced to put off the marriage, till a friend of theirs can be written to, and come, with whom it seems they had made an old engagement, that he should be the father at their wedding, if any one was, out of their two families. In the mean time I am sorry to say they look rather black

on me ; and not only they, but a many of the neighbours too. But luckily I had made up my mind to that before ~~had~~”

“They must look black upon *me*, too, then. For I should have done just the same, according to what I understand of the case. But I suppose you told them on what ground you went ?”

“I did, Sir, as well as I could, in my plain way. I saw them all at different times, Mr. Vane, and my sister, and the two young people, and told them all the same thing ; viz., that I look on marriage as a sacred thing ; that the Church never meant her sacred things to be made common ; that such would be the case, were a person in Letitia’s state (for do you know, Sir, she is not yet even baptized,) to be admitted to Christian marriage ; that the neglect of this rule is every day doing great mischief ; and that, being as I am, Philip’s Godfather, as well as his nearest relation, I was bound especially to do what I could to hinder him from the sin and the peril.

“And it was curious to me, Sir, in the midst of my vexation, to observe in what a different way the different persons I had to deal with received what I had to say. Each had his own objection, one to one part of my notions, and another to another. Mr. Vane thought it very strange that marriage should be made so purely a matter of Religion ; my sister, I am sorry to say, was inclined to think very slightly of the difference between us and the Baptists ; Philip was quite sure, that let him be once married, he should soon bring his wife to the same way of thinking as himself, (for to do him justice, he has no thought of leaving the Church;) and, as for the young woman, she said but little, but what she said, affected me more than all the rest ; for she really seemed to think me unkind and cruel, in exposing and discrediting her, and making her out (so she said,) to be no Christian.”

“I do not much wonder,” said I, “at the young people ; but I own I am a little surprised that Mr. Vane should utter a thought which appears to me so very shocking, as that marriage need not be sanctified by Religion at all.”

“Why, Sir,” replied Richard Nelson, “he has been of late much out and about, talking with all sorts of people ; and then he meddles with politics and elections, all rather in a wild way, and it brings him into strange company, and sets him on reading strange books : So he has picked up this notion among others. But I should not have thought of arguing with him about it, it seems so absurd and shocking of itself, if I had not been afraid of his doing my nephew some harm by it ; for Philip was in the room with us, of course listening eagerly to what passed. But I do not know” (interrupting himself,) “why I am troubling you, Sir, with this conversation.”

“By all means go on, I beg of you. I am a little inquisitive to know what he could have to say for such a notion.”

“His fancy was, as far as I could make it out, that the peace and order of the country is every thing. And if, said he, people can go

on well, and be faithful and happy in marriage without any public religious service, why should it be urged on them by other folks?"

"To which I suppose you answered, that there is another world as well as this; and it does not follow that things will turn out well in that, because to our short and dim sight they seem to go on in peace and order here."

"To be sure, Sir, that is very plain; but I do not think I went so deep. I took him straight to Scripture; for in that way I thought Philip would attend to me most. I put it to him in this way: if marriage is a different thing to a Christian from what it would be to any one else; if it is not only one of the greatest earthly blessings, but also a special and holy token, appointed by God to signify unto us the mystical union that is betwixt CHRIST and his Church; then, to enter on it without prayer, or in any other but a religious way, must be almost as affronting to the ALMIGHTY, as if one profaned the Sacrament of His Son's body and blood. And again, since we are plainly told, that Christian men ought never to expect any blessing from God, except as members of His Son's body, (that is, I take it, as parts of His Church,) how can one help fearing to forfeit the whole of the blessing intended in matrimony, if one scornfully refuse it as offered by the Church? And I take it, that every man *does* reject it in God's sight, who, disliking it in his heart, submits to it merely because it is law or custom. Thus I went on, not expecting to make any impression on Mr. Vane; indeed, I saw too clearly that he was sneering in his heart all the time, but he did not like to say much, for fear of turning Philip against him; who, as I rejoiced to perceive, entered very much into this part of my talk. As we walked away to my sister's, he expressed to me some wonder that so pious a man as Mr. Vane should ever have approved of the notion of marrying by Justices of the Peace. 'But I assure you, uncle,' said he, 'that we none of us agree with him. My mother and Letitia would both of them be miserable if they thought the Church's blessing would be wanting on our union. And although I must acknowledge that I could wish some parts of the service omitted, yet it must be owned, on the whole, to be extremely beautiful; and I for my part, he went on to say, 'never expect to see the day, when *I* shall take any dislike to the Church, for that or any other reason.'"

Here I interrupted Richard in his recital. "I do wish," I said, "that people who are so much wiser and more delicate than the Prayer Book, would look a little into their Bibles too. And when they have well reformed both, we shall see how purely the world will go on, the warnings of God being silenced, and the mistake corrected, which the Church has made, in speaking out plainly about fashionable and shameful sins."

My friend Richard smiled at my vehemence, and said, "To be sure, Sir, it is tolerably plain, that the very repugnance which many men feel towards repeating such parts of the service is rather a proof of their usefulness and necessity, supposing the substance

of them to be true. For it is plain, that people who shudder so much at repeating them after the Church, would never have courage to deliver the like warnings for themselves. And the same kind of remark may be made on the passage you now allude to in the Office for Matrimony. And thus people might be left to perish unwarned, through false delicacy, or false good-nature. I must say, that if I was a Clergyman, and felt, as I suppose I should feel, that such warnings ought to be given, I should feel deeply obliged to the Prayer Book for putting words into my mouth, and commanding me to speak them. I would much rather have it so, than be left to form words of my own. I should feel it less painful to myself, and probably less annoying to others. And now that we are upon this subject; permit me, Sir, just to ask you, do you not think it would do much good, and correct what may perhaps be justly called the *vulgar* objections to the Marriage Service, if men would try to enter a little more into the spirit of the household stories, and family scenes of the Old Testament? The Book of Ruth especially—can any one read it reverentially, and not learn a great difference between True and False Delicacy? You will feel my meaning, Sir, at once."

"Indeed," said I, "I do; and although I am not aware that I ever before heard it said in so many words, yet, I should imagine it must have been silently experienced by every right-minded reader. And if it should turn out, that the spirit of that Book is exactly the same with the spirit of our Marriage Service, who would desire a more complete vindication of it? But pray let us go back to your story, which I beg pardon for having interrupted. You were on the way to your sister, Mrs. Carey's; and I think you told me, that you found it very hard to make her so much as understand your objection to the marriage, or how any one could possibly imagine Baptists, as such, to be aliens to the Church."

"Yes! she was quite positive at first, that I must have some view of my own, some worldly purpose, in 'setting my head' against the match. As long as she had this fancy, she would not even listen to my arguments: and as it was, I believe she did but half hear them. I did not indeed trouble her with many: for I thought that two or three plain texts, with the interpretation confirmed by a little unquestionable history, might and ought to be sufficient."

"Let me just guess, what line you probably took with her. I suppose you first pointed out to her, that our SAVIOUR's promises are made to individuals, not simply as believing and repenting, but as joining themselves, by faith and repentance, to the Church which He was founding through his Apostles. For instance, you might perhaps put her in mind, that our SAVIOUR, in His prayer before His sufferings, in ch. xvii. of St. John, plainly had an eye to the command He purposed to give them, when He was going to be taken out of their sight: which command we read in the last three verses of St. Matthew. The prayer was "not for the Apostles alone, but for all who should believe on Him THROUGH THEIR

WORD: that they might all be one." For whom was this prayer offered? Not for all who any how should believe in CHRIST, but "for them who should believe in Him through the word of the Apostles:" i. e. for the very same persons described in the other text: "Go ye and teach (or as it is in the margin, *make Disciples, or Christians of*) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST." Those whom he had before prayed for, he here in effect orders to be taught or made Disciples, by persons having Apostolical authority. But these very same Disciples are to be one and all baptized. For our LORD's words are quite express: "Make Christians of them by baptizing them," so that if we are to go by these words, it is quite plain that persons unbaptized cannot properly be called Christians: and if we compare the same words with the other text, it seems very doubtful whether such persons are included in the meaning of our SAVIOUR's gracious intercession: which is surely a point to be deeply considered. Do you quite understand me, Richard?"

"Yes, Sir, I believe I do. Those are some of the places in Scripture, which I turned to and begged my sister Lucy to consider. But of course, Sir, I could not reason on them so exactly as you have now done. There was another place too, which I begged her to think a good deal of, which must needs, I think, sound very awful to those who are inclined to make light of Baptism: I mean what was said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of WATER and of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD." It seems to me, Sir, that in speaking those words, our SAVIOUR, who knew what he would do, must have borne in mind his purpose of causing water to be what it is made in the Sacrament of Baptism, the outward and visible sign of our new birth, and admission into His Church. I put the substance of the two places side by side in this way.

St. John iii. 5.

If you would enter into the kingdom of God, you must be born of water and of the SPIRIT.

What made me stronger in this opinion, was observing the like argument in our Divine Master's language, when speaking of the other Holy Sacrament. As thus: for I wrote the four places down, to make my meaning plain to the very eye.

St. John vi. 53.

If you would have life in you, you must eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood.

St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

If you would be a Disciple, or Christian, you must be baptized by Apostolical authority in the name of the HOLY TRINITY.

St. Matt. xxvi. 28.

If you would eat CHRIST's body and drink his blood, you must take and eat the bread, and drink of the cup, blessed by those who have authority to bless it, in remembrance of Him.

“I hope, Sir, you will not think that I am using the Bible too freely: but I must own, to me it is very convincing, when I see one part of our SAVIOURS discourses thus pointing as it were to another, and both so thoroughly agreeing with the known customs of the early Church, as I have always understood these do.

For it is now some few years, Sir, since I began to think on this subject, and what few doubts I had, were very much settled by a book which you kindly spared me from your Lending Library. I think it was called ‘A Conference of two Men on the subject of Infant Baptism.’* And it showed to my thinking most clearly, the opinion of the Church on that subject, in times when they must have known what the very Apostles used to do.

“These things, in my plain way, I tried to point out to my sister; and I was in hopes to have convinced her, that wilfully to remain unbaptized is a more grievous sin than the generality of Dissenters (aye, and a great many Churchmen) imagine. I thought, when our LORD so distinctly affirmed, that one MUST be born of water and the Spirit, before one could even “enter into God’s kingdom,” it was not too much to ask of a Christian man, that he should not marry such a person, considering what the HOLY SPIRIT has said by St. Paul, to all Christians, that if they marry, they must marry “in the Lord;” that is to say, must select such persons as make part of the body of CHRIST, considering too what strict charges were given to the Israelites of old time, not to make marriages with the heathen and unbelievers. I thought to myself, and I put it strongly to my sister, how can I, with these convictions, with the Scriptures lying open before me, and as I think distinctly forbidding such things, how can I be helper to such a union? how can I come to God’s altar, and present my relation there to Him, and beg His blessing on an act which in my conscience I believe to be sinful, and most provoking to Him? In short, I told them it was out of the question; and if they would put themselves in my place for a moment, they would see that it must be so.”

“I should like to know what the young man thought, as he stood by and heard all this.”

“Oh, Sir, I could see that he was very uneasy; he made two or three endeavours to break in upon us with some remarks of his own: but I was steady in not permitting him till I had stated my own view, so as to give it a fair chance. When I had finished, and was going away, leaving my sister, as it seemed to me, more puzzled than convinced by what had been said, Philip came close up to me, and said, in the tone of a man more or less vexed, ‘You mistake me quite, uncle, if you think I have any notion of leaving the Church, because I am proposing to marry one who is not yet a Churchwoman. I like the Church as well as ever. I was born and bred in it, and hope to die in it; nay, and by this very engagement of mine, I expect to do good service to the Church. For I shall

be very much disappointed indeed, if Letitia be not very soon prevailed on to be baptized, and conform, after she becomes my wife."

"I told him, if such was indeed her mind, the matter might in no long time be settled to the satisfaction of us all. He had only to wait till that happy change, which he so confidently looked for, had taken place, and I would most gladly attend him as he desired. At this he looked a little disconcerted, and it was plain enough that he had been mistaking what he only wished, for what was likely to happen. So I just asked him one question, whether he thought himself wiser and steadier than Solomon? He very likely (said I,) when he permitted himself first to form an attachment to a heathen, expected to bring her over to the faith and worship of the one true God; but it ended in his becoming himself an idolater. Indeed, God's warnings to his ancient people, not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, every where go upon the notion, that the corrupting side in such unions will be commonly too strong for that which was originally right. How can it be otherwise, while human nature is corrupt, and when the aid of Divine Grace is forfeited by men's presumptuously running themselves into a state of continual temptation? And, I added, what I have more than once heard from those who have read modern history, that the same kind of result is there also visible enough, attending on the like profane marriages among those who call themselves Christians. I ventured to mention one example, which had occurred to myself, in such little reading as I have had time for in that line—the example of one whom I deeply honour and reverence—you will guess that I mean King Charles the Martyr. I do not know, whether I am right, but it has always seemed to me, that the one great error of his Majesty's life was his being "unequally yoked" with a person of another creed,—a person with whom I suppose he could not well pray, although, as we happen to know for certain, he prayed constantly for her conversion. His own faith to be sure was unstained; but we know what evil ensued to his family and kingdom; and perhaps many of his own calamities might be traced to the same cause. Now if that just and good king cannot be excused for such a marriage, what can be said for an ordinary Christian, should he run into the like danger? What is 'tempting God, if this be not?' Thus I ran on; but Philip evidently paid little attention to me. He seemed to be making up his mind that I was prejudiced, and that it was no use his listening at all. So I went away for the present, hoping before long to have an opportunity of speaking to him when he was more willing to hear."

"I thought," said I, "that you told me just now of your having conversed with the young woman herself: did I mistake you? or was that at another time?"

"That was just as I was going away: I passed by accident through the room where she was, and we had a very few words together. It was plain at once, by her manner, that she considered me personally unkind in what I had been saying of her to my

sister. I begged her to bear with me, considering that I was so much older, and that I could have nothing at heart but my nephew's good ; and I put her in mind of two or three things which had passed, such as I thought would be most apt to pacify and soothe her when she remembered them ; and then I begged her seriously to consider, not at present whether I was right or no in my opinion of the necessity of Baptism, but, supposing I thought myself right, how could I act otherwise than I was doing ? Which, I asked, is the truer charity ? to let people go on unbaptized and unsanctified, for fear of paining them ;—to treat them as if they were quite safe, when, if you will believe our SAVIOUR, you must believe they have not yet even entered into the Church or Kingdom of God,—or to show them that you feel in earnest for their danger ; to remind them what sentence the Church would pass on them, should they die in their present condition ? She would not, in that case, allow them Christian burial. Why ? Evidently, because she thinks them not members of CHRIST's body ; not entitled by covenant to those promises, the rehearsing of which over the grave are in her mind a part of Christian burial. I believe and obey the Church ; and if it was the nearest and dearest relation I have, I should count it kindness, not cruelty, to treat him as she would have him treated ; to 'have compassion on him, making a difference,' and so try to bring him, with an humble and penitent heart, to our SAVIOUR's Baptism in good time.

"This was the tone of what I said to her ; but I had hardly time for so much as this : however, as she is naturally good tempered and candid, she seemed to take it pretty well."

"I should like to know," said I, "whether she has ever expressed any wish for Baptism. A person who thinks of it, but is as yet irresolute, may be regarded, I should think, in a different light from one who distinctly slights and disparages it ; more like one of the beginners in Christianity, who were called in old time Catechumens. Whereas, those who indulge in scorn, and make themselves easy in such a condition, show the very temper of the worst heretics. Have you any notion to which of these two classes the young woman you are speaking of rather belongs ?"

"I should not suppose she had ever thought much of the matter, until of late, that the question has been started by this proposed wedding. What thoughts she has, I should fear, are rather of the scornful kind. She has been used to hear people say, under breath, perhaps, but not the less emphatically for that, something like what Naaman the Syrian said, 'May I not wash elsewhere and be clean ?' with plenty of hints about superstition and Popery, and other words of the like sound."

"It is too likely ; one has heard of late too much of that kind among the Baptists, and among others who agree with them in slighting the ancient Church. And worse consequences even than the contempt of Baptism follow, I fear, too often. Persons become generally irreverent towards religion altogether. A proud

common sense, as it calls itself, usurps the place of that humility which befits a creature and a sinner in judging of his duties towards God. Nothing is cordially believed which is not theoretically understood: nothing carefully and reverently practised, of which the *use* is not perceived. And thus the religion of our time is in danger of dwindling down to a wretched kind of political decency: and where, of all parties, is the change going on most rapidly? Among those who left the Apostolical Church because '*it was not spiritual enough*' for them!"

"And yet, Sir, is there any thing so strange in that? Our blessed LORD joined the two together,—the high, mysterious, and spiritual doctrine of the TRINITY, with the no less mysterious communication of grace by water Baptism. They who begin by being so bold as to despise the water, which He commanded to be used, it is very natural, as far as I see, that they should end by despising the word which He commanded to be spoken,—the sacred name of the FATHER, SON, and the HOLY GHOST."

"It is indeed but too natural, like all the other steps which men make down the broad way which leads to perdition. But it is some kind of satisfaction to me to find, that quiet thoughtful laymen see the danger, as well as we who are of the clergy. And I suppose we shall be pretty well agreed upon the remedy, namely, to do what little we can towards reviving among men the knowledge and love of the ancient Church."

Ah, Sir, if that might be! But a Christian must not despond about the Church, nor the meanest Christian of being made useful, in his place, to the highest ends. I will not therefore indulge in forebodings; but will rather try again what I can do with the opportunity which Providence *has* put in my way. I certainly will do nothing to countenance this marriage; and if I cannot prevent it, at least some part of what I say may rise up in some of their minds some day, and may help them to truer and better thoughts. But you must help me, Sir, with your advice, and (may I be so bold!) with your prayers."

"It is my bounden duty, Richard," said I, as I shook him by the hand at parting. "And take this Scripture home for your comfort; that if a man humbly 'cast his bread upon the waters,'—if he trust his Maker with it in earnest, he shall 'find it after many days.'"

No. 143.

NEW YORK:

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1839

TRACTS FOR PAROCHIAL USE.

No. 2.

AN ARGUMENT

FOR

CONFIRMATION.

DRAWN FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT EXCLUSIVELY.

BY

THE RT. REV. B. B. SMITH, D. D.
BISHOP OF KENTUCKY.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
ST. PAUL.



NEW YORK:

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AN ARGUMENT FOR CONFIRMATION.

THE difference is very great between Doctrines, essential to salvation, and Rites and Ceremonies desirable and important for the good order of the Church, and as helps toward our salvation. It is in reference to the first only, that the maxim of Chillingworth is altogether true: “The Bible—the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants!” Or, as the same sentiment is more guardedly and fully expressed in the sixth of our XXXIX Articles: “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.”

With regard to all that is essential to the two Holy Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and to a divinely constituted ministry, the same maxims are substantially true. But they need to be explained, to be modified or expanded, as the case may be, when applied to the orders in the ministry, and the mode and manner of administering the Holy Sacraments, and to all those other almost numberless forms, rites, and ceremonies which are inseparable

from a well organized Church. In all such cases it is not true that “The Bible—the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants !”

The practice of the Primitive Church is often much more in point, than the precepts of our Lord, or of His Holy Apostles. Not that it would be, if they had spoken to the point ; but what they have omitted in words, as being of less importance than the grand doctrines upon which they have spoken, is often supplied by such practices of their successors, as they must have received from the Holy Apostles.

Did the scope of my argument admit it, I might explain my meaning, by showing that all we can learn—with regard to the Lord’s Supper, from the Scriptures alone, is limited to these few particulars : bread and wine, to be received by the faithful, in remembrance of the death of Christ, until his coming again. Nothing positive, nothing clear, either with regard to the administrator, or the frequency, or the time, or the posture, or the kind of bread, or whether pure wine, or wine and water mixed. And yet, practically, nearly every one of these things must necessarily be decided some way or other, every time the Lord’s Supper is administered. And if a better method of determining these questions can be pointed out, than the practice of the Primitive Church, let it be done ; and let all humble and teachable Christians be guided accordingly.

The illustration might be extended to the ministry of the Church ; to its organization by means of Councils, Synods, Conferences, or Conventions ; to its discipline and worship, and to all those minor matters

which constitute the body of the Church, and belong to its daily life: "The Bible—the Bible alone," is not sufficient for all things; for, if it were, the great body of Protestant Christians would be as nearly agreed concerning the outward order of the Church, as they are with regard to the plan of salvation.

Candor required a dry disquisition of this nature, before entering upon the argument before me, lest it should be thought that I regard this argument the best, or the only one we have. Whereas, in setting forth the claims of Confirmation to the regard of Christian people, by an exhaustive argument, this would only be its opening. From the argument from the Word of God, we should pass on to that which may be drawn from primitive and universal practice, and from the testimony of the wisest and best of men, in all ages of the Church.

But yielding so far to a popular misapprehension, that no doctrine, duty, or practice is binding upon the people of God, but what is expressly enjoined in His Holy Word, I here venture to announce, and undertake to maintain the startling proposition, that the proof texts in the New Testament, with regard to Confirmation, or laying on of hands, are decidedly more explicit and weighty, than those in favor of observing the Lord's Day, as holy time.

I do not object to the common expression, that the Sabbath is a Divine Institution. It requires considerable modification and explanation, however, before it can be correctly applied to the Lord's Day: and it is only in this qualified sense that it can be applied to

Confirmation. My proposition, therefore, must be defined and limited, before it is defended.

The fact that Christians set apart one day in seven for the public worship of God, and for the performance of other offices of devotion, affiliates them with that ancient covenant people of God, the Israelites, who do the same. But it is well known that they observe the seventh day of the week, their ancient Sabbath. We Christians, on the other hand, observe the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday ; but more properly, the Lord's Day. Whence this change ? It was made to commemorate the Resurrection of our Lord : but when, and by whose authority was this change made ? Not by express divine or apostolic direction ; but precisely in the same way, and by the same authority, by which the laying on of hands became one of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. The setting apart a seventh portion of time for the public worship of Almighty God is by express divine authority, as we read in the fifth Commandment. And it is by the transfer of that authority to the first day of the week, that our ears have become familiar with the expression, that the Sabbath is a Divine Institution. No reasonable objection can be alleged against this transfer. But then, if the Lord's Day is a divine institution, so is Confirmation, and so is the office of a Bishop, to whom belongs the administration of the rite.

And this leads to the various senses in which the words, "a Divine Institution," are employed. If you mean ordained by Christ Himself, in so many words, then Baptism and the Lord's Supper are divine insti-

tutions, and Confirmation and the Lord's Day are not. But if you mean changes, and offices, and rites, and ceremonies, sanctioned by apostolic practice, as proved by ample warrant of Scripture, then the Lord's Day is a divine institution ; and so is Episcopacy and Confirmation, with which, for more than fifteen hundred years, it was almost inseparably connected. This is a somewhat loose sense in which to use the expression, "jure divino," but is very common, and when properly understood, is not justly liable to objection.

The proposition before us, then, when more carefully defined, though in this community sufficiently extraordinary, need not be regarded as startling. It is simply this, that the change from the seventh day of the week to the first, for the performance of the public offices of our Holy Religion, is less frequently, and less emphatically referred to in the New Testament, than the laying on of hands, as one of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

The argument is addressed to the candor of those who cheerfully admit, that what is scriptural is binding ; whilst no concession is made to the prejudice that nothing else is. In point of fact none of us are quite consistent. Whilst professing to follow these Scriptures wheresoever they lead, each denomination is apt to stop short somewhere ; as, indeed, we all do with regard to diaconesses, washing the disciples' feet, and the kiss of charity, and the most of us, with regard to agapæ, or Love-feasts ; and probably with good reason : and all of us accepting from the universal consent of all Christians, many practices of which there is no trace in the word of God ; such as the

elements, attitudes, and forms of expression, in the administration of the Lord's Supper ; and the subjects and mode, or, at least, the mode of the mode, in Baptism. Some of these, indeed, have not even the authority of a general consent, and yet are accepted without being questioned, and retained with a tenacity, as if they were of vital importance.

Still, an appeal to the concessions of our readers is a perfectly fair mode of arguing. If the Lord's Day is accepted as a divine institution, why not Confirmation ? If we are bound by a practice which has less scriptural authority, why not by that which has more ?

Any one pursuing this line of argument will be very much struck with the fact, that there is precisely the same number of proof-texts on each of the subjects ; and, with one exception, all belonging to the same class of incidental notice, rather than of prescription or instruction ; and that marked exception relates to Confirmation, and not to the Lord's Day.

I. 1. Of the three passages which relate to the Lord's Day, the first occurs in Acts xx., 7 : " And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, (at Troas,) Paul preached unto them."

Here our religious services, preaching, and the administration of the Lord's Supper, by an ordained minister, on the Lord's Day—or rather, long after dark on that day : but there is no command for following either example ; or any intimation that it had grown into a practice.

2. You will find the next passage in 1 Cor. xvi., 1, 2 : " Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." It is by no means clear that these gatherings were regularly in Church every Lord's Day, though the setting apart for that purpose was to be. And since this incidental notice occurs at a somewhat different time, and in a remote part of the country, and includes the churches of Galatia, and was for a common object, some interest in which was expected to be kept alive for a length of time, it is rendered almost certain, that the observance of the first day of the week, as holy time, had become fixed and common among Christians. A tone of authority runs through this passage, in striking contrast with the deferential mode in which ministers, who now solicit charitable contributions, are fain to address the people, if they would hope for success. " As I have given order to the churches in Galatia, so do ye." -

3. More than thirty years afterward, the most aged of the Apostles, and the last survivor of them, the beloved disciple of them all, writes of himself, (Rev. i., 9, 10 :) " I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ : I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet."

An exile, alone, on that desolate isle, holding such high, holy, and intimate communion with his Saviour, that the portals of Heaven were opened before him, and he soared aloft on prophetic wings ; ah, this looks as if worship on the first day of the week had become so much a delight with this favorite of Heaven, that he had already become well nigh perfect under its hallowed influences : as if the habit of public worship could not be laid aside in his utter solitude ; and as if he sought and found his highest consolation in offices of devotion. And then, by this time, this sacred season had acquired the blessed name it has, in all lands and every tongue, retained until our times, THE LORD'S DAY, not Sabbath ; that is Jewish, and properly designates the seventh day—not Sunday, for that is Roman and heathen in its origin ; but Lord's Day, as it should be.

And is this all ? Literally every word that can be gathered from the New Testament on this important subject. Some will esteem it sufficient and altogether satisfactory. Others will prefer to fortify the argument, by the universal consent and practice of all Christians, in all ages, except a few Judaizing teachers of old, and a few Seventh-day Baptists of modern times.

II. The way is thus prepared for bringing forward the texts in favor of Confirmation, which, though the same in number, must be confessed to be very much more explicit and weighty.

1. In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have the following narrative, (5th and 6th verses) : “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them : and the peo-

ple with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." "And (8th verse,) there was great joy in that city." (14th to 17th verses :) "Now when the Apostles which were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost : for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

It is sufficient for our purpose to point out the plain facts in this case. Certain Gentile converts, the fruits of the extraordinary labors of Philip, one of the first Deacons, had been baptized by him, or some other minister of his company, not an Apostle, but that for the performance of another religious act, closely related to Baptism, two of the Apostles were sent for ; and that act was laying on of hands, or Confirmation.

Ah ! but, exclaims the objector, those were the days of miracles, and the Holy Ghost was given, perhaps, visibly, probably by conferring some miraculous gifts. The authority of your Bishops to confirm would not now be disputed, if it were thus attested. This objection will be answered in its place. Meantime the second text is adduced.

2. In the first seven verses of the xix. chapter of Acts, we have the following narrative : " And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came

to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

The same facts stand forth here so conspicuously, that it is not necessary to comment upon them. These baptisms were probably administered by some companion of St. Paul, certainly not by him; and we are not left to conjecture that miraculous gifts followed the laying on of hands. The point most worthy of notice, though not in connection with our argument, is that John's baptism was certainly not Christian baptism. Probably, like his ministry, it was intermediate between Proselyte Baptism and Christian Baptism.

3. -In our third example we pass from narrative and incidental allusion, to a summary of doctrines and ordinances. It is contained in the first two verses of the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of

faith toward God of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Compared with all the other texts which we have cited, this is a very remarkable passage. As the doctrinal Epistles of Paul differ from the Evangelic narratives ; so this summary differs from the facts we have collected from the Acts of the Apostles. In no such summary can any mention be found of the Lord's Day ; still less in any summary declared to contain the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Pausing to analize this summary, we shall find that it consists of six items, under three distinct heads : 1st, Doctrines necessary to be believed ; 2nd, Practices important to be observed ; and 3d, Future events, the objects of expectation and hope. The doctrines are repentance and faith ; the practices, baptism and the laying on of hands ; and the events still future, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

All the earlier commentators, including those of the Reformation, and for some fifty years afterward, are unanimous in interpreting the laying on of hands here mentioned as Confirmation. The relation it bears to baptism, connected with the narratives above recorded, admits of no other ; for this is the only laying on of hands, inseparable from baptism. There are three other kinds of laying on of hands mentioned in the New Testament : in benediction, in ordination, and in special commission. But all these are partial, belonging to certain persons only. Whereas, here is a laying on of hands, belonging as a matter of duty, of

obedience and of hope, as faith, or repentance, or baptism, or the resurrection, or eternal judgment.

If it is the duty of every Christian to repent and believe, and then to comply with the divine direction, to be baptized for the remission of sins, in order that he may attain to a good hope, through grace, of a glorious resurrection from the dead, and a blessed acquittal at the day of judgment ; then, and by the same authority, he is bound to ask for the laying on of hands ; for it is evidently as much the duty and the privilege of every Christian, as either of the other five principles of the doctrine of Christ.

And thus, by another method, we come round to the same conclusion, that there is decidedly more explicit and weighty evidence, upon which to enforce the duty of Confirmation on every Christian who bows to the authority of the New Testament, than there is, that it is his duty to keep the Lord's Day holy, instead of the Jewish Sabbath. If, with him, the one has the authority of a divine institution, how can he be excused if he neglects the other ?

Our argument completed, the way is opened for considering the objection that Confirmation is by no means to be retained in the Church, because miraculous gifts, of which it appears to have been a sign, have long since ceased. Before any weight can be conceded to this objection, it would be necessary to show that the sign was not connected with a double gift ; the ordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, for the conversion, renewal and sanctification of the soul, as well as of his extraordinary and miraculous gifts. The first meets a perpetual want, and is of infinitely

the most importance. Miraculous gifts were very temporary, and always partial. The very Apostles do not seem to have exercised them at all times, or on all occasions. Christians, in private life, were not even commonly thus endowed. The whole argument of St. Paul upon the subject assumes it as a fact, that the Great Head of the Church divided these wonderful gifts to each man, severally as He pleased. And unless this were the sole design of the ordinance, it by no means follows, that the discontinuance of the gifts dispenses with the ordinance.

This whole question of miraculous gifts is one of the most curious and perplexing connected with the history of the church, in the ages immediately subsequent to the death of the Apostles. The better opinion of the ablest writers appears to be, that they were given only to inspire the Apostles with confidence and zeal, to impress unbelievers with awe and wonder, and to pave the way for the early triumphs of Christianity, before it had attained, as a social system, consistency and strength enough to sustain itself, and force its way, in the midst of an unfriendly world: and few of them admit the probability of their having continued later than the time of Cyprian, A. D., 250.

It is admitted, that, at some time more or less remote from the death of St. John, the last of the Apostles, miraculous gifts were withdrawn from the Church. But it is equally certain that the laying on of hands continued to be practiced. In those days wise and good men governed the Church; and with far superior opportunities than ours of judging what

was expedient and best, with perfect unanimity they decided, that Confirmation is by all means to be retained in the Church, although miraculous gifts have ceased. And this not from caprice or from habit, but simply because they had received it from apostolic men, as they, on their part, had received it from the Apostles themselves, as one of the six first principles of the doctrine of Christ enumerated by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. Not as important as repentance and faith ; not a sacrament, like Baptism, which was ordained by Christ Himself, but an ordinance to follow as a part of it, appointed by the Apostles, and never separated from it : baptism, a sacramental seal of the promise of pardon ; and confirmation, a ritual seal of the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. And when we reflect, that the Apostles sanctioned the observance of the Lord's Day as a weekly memorial of the resurrection of Christ, beside the annual memorial at Easter ; why should it astonish us that they should have ordained an individual memorial of the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Penticost, over and above its annual memorial on Whitsun-day ?

In some ancient catalogue of the books of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles is called the Gospel of the Holy Ghost ; implying, that now that our Lord is seated at the right hand of the Father, He administers the affairs of His Church by the Holy Ghost, shed forth abundantly, agreeably to His own most gracious promise. Whatever spiritual benefit attends or follows the administration of Baptism, proceeds from the Holy Ghost. Whosoever, by faith,

worthily receives the memorials of the cross and passion of our blessed Saviour, it is by the grace of the Holy Ghost. The outward commission to the ministry is imparted by the laying on of hands on the part of those to whom it belongs ; but if the inward grace accompany the outward and visible sign, it must be by the Holy Ghost. And the promised guidance which we have a right to expect in all the councils of the church duly convened, is by reason of its being presided over by the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of Christ's Apostles ; and apostolic men evidently had no more doubt, that the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost was sealed to the baptized, by the laying on of hands, than they had that the promise of the pardon of sin was sealed in Baptism itself.

Had miraculous gifts, at first, followed Baptism, and if, after a while, those gifts had been withheld, we cannot conceive that Baptism would have fallen into disuse. Its ordinary benefits would still have remained until the end of time. And they are the ordinary benefits of the ordinances and sacraments to the Gospel, in all ages and countries, which constitute their highest value. As far as the Church is a visible and earthly society for the benefit of man, it can move with the mechanical precision of an automaton ; but it is only a living body, when animated by the life-giving power of the Holy Ghost. And His blessed influence in enlightening the understanding, guiding and sanctifying the affections, and sweetly controlling the will of each individual believer, is of as much greater value than any extraordinary or miraculous gifts, as the soul is of more value than the body.

Many there are, who, convinced by these arguments and abandoning every technical objection, are still disposed to ask : Of what use is the laying on of hands ? In what respects are those who receive it more favored or blessed than those who reject it ? What good does it do ?

As nearly all Christian people are agreed as to the duty and binding obligation of Baptism, there can be no indirectness or unfairness in answering these questions, by asking some of similar import, with regard to Baptism : Of what use is it ? And the scriptural answer, in substance would be, the same which St. Paul gives to the question : “What profit is there of circumcision ?” It is the advantage of a covenant ; of being united to Christ, by promise sealed by an oath, instead of remaining strangers and aliens from the covenant of promise.

But the answer may be varied, thus ; that depends upon many things : if an adult person comes to Holy Baptism merely in compliance with a time-honored custom ; or to escape the importunities of some overzealous friend, “it profiteth nothing.” Or, as very rarely happens in these our days, from base or interested motives, or with hypocritical intention to deceive ; it is a most grievous offence and sin in the sight of God, greatly endangering the salvation of the soul, instead of conducing to it. “But if, with a true penitent heart and living faith,” a trembling and sincere soul “comes to that Holy Sacrament,” there can be no doubt, that the promise is sealed to him of the forgiveness of all his sins, and that he is

made therein "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

No fallacy can be perceived in the application of the same reply to the question, what is the use of Confirmation, in the sense in which it is put by the objector. If a thoughtless child come to Confirmation merely because it is the custom where he lives ; or, any one yielding to the solicitations of young companions, or the importunity of ill advised friends, in the midst of a gay and thoughtless life, assumes these vows without reflection, and without any idea of entering, with earnest sincerity, upon a religious life ; "it profiteth them nothing :" but rather adds to the awful weight of responsibility, for slighted opportunities, neglected duties, and violated vows.

But if, as the result of careful religious training, any young person is conscious to himself that he no longer merely repeats his prayers, as an unmeaning habit, or a tiresome ceremony ; but, feeling the need of pardon, and of divine assistance, has begun to pray in real earnest ; and so desires more grace as to be earnestly seeking for it, in every way of God's appointment, let him draw near, and receive this holy ordinance, to his great and sensible comfort.

Or, if an old person, involved in the duties, and oppressed with the cares and sorrows of life, deeply feels the need of divine assistance to guide him in the way of duty, and to strengthen him in running the race set before him, let him not doubt, but earnestly believe that the Holy Ghost will be given, at his need, according to the divine promise.

And if, under a profound conviction of the dark-

ness of our natural understanding, the hardness of our hearts, and the corruption and sinfulness of our whole nature, any one feels the necessity of being renewed and sanctified, by the mighty influence of His grace, who alone is the Author and Giver of all spiritual life, why, for one moment, or under any plea, refuse to draw nigh to Him, in the way of His appointment, that, in the laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost may be given unto him ?

TRACTS FOR PAROCHIAL USE.

No. 4.

A

LETTER TO YOUNG PEOPLE NOT YET CONFIRMED.

BY
REV. N. H. CHAMBERLAIN,
RECTOR OF ST. JAMES, BIRMINGHAM, CONN.

New York:
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY,
5 COOPER UNION, FOURTH AVENUE,

No. 289.

1866.

24 pp.

O GOD, the Father, Merciful and Almighty, who hast given,
through Thy Son Jesus Christ, the Church to be the Ark in which
men may be carried safely across the sea of this weary life to the
haven of eternal peace, grant that tongues may be so touched of
the Holy Ghost, and the ears so opened, that those who hear may
turn to Thee with all their heart, and be found by Thee at the last
day delivered and saved through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.



LETTER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS :

I wish to say a few plain things to you about confirmation. Those of you who have been bred in the Church know that confirmation is that godly and apostolic rite in which, as the Prayer Book says : "Children being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, may themselves, with their own mouth, and consent openly before the Church, ratify and confirm the same." By this you are put in mind how, when you were helpless infants, those who loved you, by the aid of the Church, who is the spiritual mother of all of you, as Christ ordered, had you made a member of Christ's Church by baptism. When you are confirmed, you declare, as the priest had spoken at your baptism : "'I was received as a child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and was signed with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter I should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but manfully fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil; and continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end.' All this I reaffirm before the world. I take Christ's cross, God helping me, in my hand and in my heart. I will live in Him as a member of His Church. I will confess Him, obey Him, pray to Him, and keep to Him, my crucified but glorified Lord and Saviour." It is plain to

you that confirmation is a necessary part of that reasonable order of the Church by which she educates you for the kingdom of heaven. To those of you who may be unacquainted with the ways of the Church, it may be sufficient here to say that confirmation in the Catholic Church (and by that I mean three-fourths of all professing Christianity) is admission to all the rights of the Church, and especially to the Lord's Supper. It is the way appointed by the Church to her full communion. You should not think her to be exacting or singular in this, since all religious bodies have their own peculiar way of admission to their fold, and this is her way.

Most of you who read these words I shall never see; and yet, for the love I bear you in Jesus Christ, you are no strangers to me. In His name, therefore, I address you. It is simply to beseech you to accept His cross, and the salvation forever nailed to it; but you can accept His cross only as members of His Church. I am asking you therefore merely to accomplish your part in your own salvation. I must hasten to make an explanation.

In this letter I shall call upon you to be Christians. Now, in one sense, the Church considers all persons who have been properly baptized as Christians, that is to say, as belonging to Jesus Christ, and as members of His Church. But one must not only enter into the Christian life and covenant by baptism, but he must also continue and advance in them, by fulfilling all those offices which belong to Christians. Be pleased to consider then when I call upon you to be Christians, I ask you simply to live that life to which baptism introduced you.

You see then that it is a very grave matter which I have mentioned to you, no less than the question of an eternal destiny either of unspeakable joy or wretchedness, which, after this life, can never be al-

tered by anything you might desire, or pray even with a breaking but forever unbroken heart, to do. The Bible tells you that there are two ways opened before you. In one way you ascend towards God, towards Jesus Christ, towards eternal life. In the other you descend towards devils, to the society of all that is base and scandalous, and are made heirs of eternal death. The first way is Christ's way and the Church's way, and over the entrance to it is writ "Salvation." The second way is Satan's way and sin's way, and over it is writ "Perdition." Now you all believe this, because all Christian people believe it, and the Church has taught it, and the Bible on almost every page is full of it. The texts from Holy Writ, which prove it, would make a large book if they were gathered together; and there is no getting rid of this most solemn Word of God. It was to persuade you to the way of life that God hath spoke to you in Scripture; that Christ died for you upon the cross; that the Church baptizes you, and teaches you so carefully of spiritual things. Is it not a very solemn matter—this choice of yours between life and death, when even the Lord from heaven died on Calvary to teach you and enable you to choose the one way of life? Now confirmation is really your choice of eternal life. In that rite you choose Christ, the Church, the kingdom of heaven, and to be Christians. Our gentle mother, the Church, in baptism placed us in the way of life. In confirmation you vow solemnly before the world: "I will walk, God helping me, in this way unto my life's end." If you persistently neglect or refuse confirmation—for you must choose God's service or the devil's—you have already chosen. You have chosen that path over the gateway of which is writ "Perdition."

I am only pleading with you then to be in this life and in the life to come Christians, Christ's men and

women. Is it, my dear friends, a harsh, an unreasonable, an unfriendly plea? It is, as you may see, the plea of the cross of the Lord who died for you.

Allow me then to state to you certain facts, and then, in conclusion, to ask you before God and your own souls a few questions. But first I will venture to ask you a question. Why are you not this day Christians, confirmed, and abiding in the Lord's Church? You believe that God has told you to do this, and yet you are really, every hour you remain of your own choice unconfirmed, refusing to obey Him. What has He done that you should disobey the voice of your heavenly Father beseeching you? Who are you, who is any man, that he should venture to reject the overtures of the all-wise and all-powerful God? You believe that for those who die without Christ, there is no hope. You are living without Christ—you die, and yet you are affording to run the daily risk of your own perdition. Is it not wonderful? Is it not a sin against your own souls and an affront to the mercy of Jesus Christ?

Allow me, my dear friends, to look into your own hearts, and from them show you why you allow yourselves to run such solemn risks and dangers. I look into your hearts when I watch the movements of the hearts of young people, like you, who live around me in my parish. It is not that you do not know your duty, nor that you do not wish (though it is often a faint and unsteady wish) to do your duty. You think of Christ sometimes, and of His cross; you desire to be His disciples. You abstain from your duty, because your conscience is benumbed and deadened by the sin in you; because your minds and affections are bewildered and enticed by the pomps and vanities of this naughty world. You are like hungry men standing before the gate of a garden in which are all manner of delectable fruits, who

are held back by some wicked enchantment from entering in. You are like men standing out in the night before the door of an open and lighted palace, who suffer the rain and the frost upon their unprotected bodies, and yet are chained hand and foot away from their home and rest. The good angel who removes the enchantment is prayer. The force that will break your chains for you is the answering power of the Holy Ghost!

Observe now what happens to you. Shall I tell you that your very youth is in some measure the enemy of your souls. Now every age and station has its special trial and temptation, and youth has its own. You are young. Pardon me if I say it, many of you are thoughtless. You are not Christians, for one thing, because you have never seriously thought about whether it was your duty to be a Christian or not. When you were a very young child, you saw little children baptized; you saw men and women upon their knees, and the priest gave them something out of a silver plate and cup. You heard a priest read prayers and Scripture; he spoke to your elders many things about their souls. This was all strange to you. You have seen the same things ever since; and they still seem unintelligible, unnecessary perhaps. And yet you notice how very respectable and intelligent persons engage in these things, and seem to think them very sober and vital matters. Do you think that all these, your own parents and friends perhaps among them, are doing what is of no possible account, something they are not bound to do? No. But do you think that they are bound to do anything which you are not bound to do? Ask them. They answer: What we must do you must do. We are Christians. We are living the Christian life, and so must you. But men can only live that life in the Christian Church. The

Church has her worship and her sacraments. We are baptized ; we partake of the Holy Eucharist ; we pray, we worship, obeying God, that so passing through this life as Christ has ordered, we may at last gain life everlasting. We are weary—we are pilgrims here ; in the Church is rest. We are tempted, as you will be, and in the Church we find the Holy Ghost to deliver us from following sin ; we are blind, troubled, afraid as you will be in life, and in the Church we find peace, courage, light. Outside the Church and we must perish. Do you think what they say foolishness ? Are they not in everything else more experienced and wiser than you, and why not then in this thing ? If they are wiser than you in this, why should you not aspire to live as they live, and to gain what they assure you they enjoy ? You have thought about your dress, your pleasure, your profession, perhaps, but you have never thought seriously about your soul or its fate. But because you have not thought seriously about your duty, are you excused from doing your duty towards Christ and His Church ? You have refused to hear His "Come to me," but every day He repeats the invitation. You have forgotten His cross, but the cross stands ; you have forgotten the pit, it is still open ; you have forgotten the gate of your salvation ; it is not yet shut.

It is required of you then to accept your own salvation. To accept it wisely, you must first see the need of it. To see the need of it, you must meditate upon it ; upon yourselves, upon what you are, need, should have ; upon that life beyond this life ; upon Christ who died for you ; upon the Church He has built for you, and upon this your duty, that you are bound, as far as God can bind a soul, and as far as you can do your duty towards your soul, to be a Christian.

There is another temptation, very like the first, to which youth especially exposes you. You will see it when I say that if there is any time when it seems as though we might live comfortable without religion, it is when we are young. I say it *seems*, for we can never live well at any time without it. In youth you are most of you free from those anxieties and cares which come soon enough to all of us, and you do not know as yet how great need a sore and weary soul has to rest itself upon the bosom of Jesus Christ. You live in sheltered homes; your temporal wants are supplied almost as soon as felt. You have known no grievous disappointments; your friends are all alive. You do not feel therefore your need of Jesus Christ. It is you who are mariners in a frail shell upon a sunny sea, who refuse to enter the stable ark of your salvation before the winds blow and the waves arise to overwhelm your soul! Perhaps you think to escape. Look at the black robes of the mourners in the Church—how many they are. Look at the old, the middle-aged—how weary they are. Ask the grave, ask any one wise in life, ask your own hearts, if you are more than mortal.

Besides, you enjoy so many things so acutely. You are gay; you are busy with your amusements and the divers fashions of life, which teach you to forget God. You laugh, you dance, you make merry—you are satisfied. If this were to last through your life, and not a single misery were to jar upon your exquisite enjoyment, then you would merely go as a gay reveller in the wedding garments of this world's vanity, to appear poor and naked before the austere and terrible judgment-seat of God. But it will not last. I say it, because all men say it. Men have said a great many diverse things when they lay a dying; but I know of no man who has lived through life to find it or call it a vale of roses. You

live perhaps in a costly house. Servants wait upon you ; your wealth is already provided for you. You have leisure, and you adorn it with dress, gaiety, display, and equipage. You use the very blessings showered down upon you by a merciful God, to lift you to the level of a grateful and prayerful faith, to blind and veil your heart against Him and His Son. You are drifting down in the current, and your happiness cannot last. These things that delight you are but baubles. I venture for a moment into your courtly circle to inquire about your future. You are too busy and full of life to answer questions. I will be sure to question then some one who equals you at least in your felicity of temporal things. It shall be the highest. I inquire of the queen in her shroud, and I find the heaviest satin cannot warm her there, nor the costliest diamonds give light to the eyes under the heavy eyelids. I ask of the whole line of kings. In his coffin, in his unmoving hand, the king's servants lay not one piece of gold out of all his treasures. It is too heavy for him to carry so far as the throne of God ; and if he brought it there, it would be as dross before the heavenly treasures that do not rust. Can we think it is true then that your pleasures and possessions—you whom men call the fortunate ones—will always satisfy and last out your needs ?

But there are those among the young who have thought carefully about spiritual things, and who confess that they ought to be Christians ; and yet neglect confirmation from year to year. They put off being Christians. Now it either is or is not right to be a Christian. You confess it is right. If it is right, it is right for you to be a Christian at once. Is it creditable or quite honorable in you—you who perhaps are so nice in discharging all your dues to your fellow men—to delay doing the duty you con-

fess you owe God, by accepting His Son's cross in confirmation? Or you excuse yourself by saying: Oh, we are not fit to come. But you have no right to be not fit to come. If you are not fit, it is your very business, by God's help, to make yourself fit. If you told a man whom you owed somewhat and had the means to pay: "I am not fit to pay you," he would say: "Make yourself fit. I demand to have in you the inclination to pay me, and then I receive my own." Has not God the same right to say: As you have ability, if you are not fit, I demand that you proceed to make yourself fit, by nurturing in your heart the inclination to give yourself to Me; and that holy inclination, which elects first and last to be Christ's man or woman, makes you fit for confirmation.

Allow me now, dear friends, to remind you of the conclusion we have reached. It is simply this, that God has laid upon us the duty which we cannot without sin repudiate, to take upon ourselves the vows and obligations which belong to Christians, as expressed in the rite of confirmation. Our gentle mother, the Church, warns us of the two ways; but she tries to move our hearts to duty by setting forth the felicity and health of the way of life which is in the Church and through Jesus Christ. She tells you this is the way of the eternal and heavenly life; but she tells you also how it is the one way of a *happy, wise, full, free, successful earthly life.*

I proceed now to adduce some reasons why this latter statement of hers is exactly true. 1. The Christian life is the only happy life. Some of you say that religion deprives you of your pleasures. But how? If it is your pleasure to do something evil, religion indeed forbids it. Can you stand in the face of the sun and say without a blush that you are unwilling to be a Christian, because it will hinder

you from doing what God forbids as wrong? Religion is the fountain-head of all that is true pleasure. It allows and fosters all temperate and decent enjoyments in their time and place; and it prepares, besides, a peaceful and child-like heart for their full reception. The Gospel of salvation does not undertake to make you all monks and nuns, but healthy-hearted men and women, living in God's world, and enjoying it as Christians should. The Church is not ascetic. She does not tell you indeed that life is a long holiday, for she speaks truth always. She assures you that this world is a place of very solemn work and wrestle; that in it you must bear burdens, meet rebuffs and losses, be pained and even scourged with agony sometimes. But she tells you also that the disciple is accompanied, comforted, and over sheltered, by the ever-living and ever-present love of Jesus Christ; and that stayed on Him, we are to live in this world with cheerfulness; not ascetics, but humble, faithful, honest, peaceful Christian men and women. You say "some Christians are morose and sour; they teach us a religion full of clouds." Some Christians, you know, dear friends, are not quite perfect.

2. Religion is wisdom and makes you wise. For true wisdom is merely a certain balance and tone of mind by which it judges and values things accurately. And what mind is better balanced and toned than the Christian's is, which is adjusted and toned by the Holy Ghost, the divine wisdom who dwells in it? Many of you desire to be learned; all of you, I hope, to be wise. Now religion will not make you linguists, savans, scholars, as the world counts scholarship, though a vital faith is the best inspiration of even human learning; but it gives you wisdom in the highest spheres of learning, by leading you back to the sources of things, and showing you everywhere

in them God. To recognize God everywhere in His works is the true wisdom ; to obey Him true religion. It is right to remind you of this in these days, when a godless and Christless science demands of us our homage. As young persons, many of you aspire, and rightly, to attain to this world's culture. But a career in the highest human culture must start from the cross, and get its inspiration from the contact of a soul with God. It is true you hear, for instance, that modern science or knowledge has overcome the Bible and confuted Christianity. It is only that what some men call the science of the age has denied its Lord, and thereby disgraced itself. True science is always religious, and religion is alone the highest science. I will explain by an example. Some savan examines into the sources of animal life. To do this he spends years in the dissecting room, and innumerable specimens of different creatures pass under the review of his dissecting knife. He tells you he has found out a stupendous law. It is this : All animals have been evolved, the higher from the lower, from one common form of animal life, and that first form from which the rest sprung, was itself evolved from matter and by matter, how exactly he does not undertake to say. That is the sublime revelation he makes your soul. We all came from an accident, and in his theory matter itself is only that. A Christian child is taught that God made all, and is in all, and gives life to all ; which is true. The child then has attained, in its simplicity, led of the unerring wisdom of God in revelation, to a truth which this man of science, without prayers, trusting to his dissecting knife, has missed. I need not remind you that the child's truth is more generous, catholic, magnificent, and royal than any dogma that the faithless intellect of this world could or can establish. Again, the human mind, without faith, is an eye without sight

and an ear without hearing. A man without God stands among the mountains. He sees colossal piles of granite lifted to the clouds ; he studies their strata and their age, and names them as a geologist ; he examines the mountain flowers, and classifies them as a botanist ; he feels a vague and sometimes even a deep pleasure in the mountain's majesty and beauty ; and that is all. His very pleasure is the movement of a blind, because faithless, soul given him of God, to be made full of light as the home of God. The Christian goes to the same locality. He looks upon the same landscape ; to him it is full of God. God lifted those granite piles, laid the strata, cleft the precipices ; led through them the silver streams ; painted the flowers, and smiles forth in them ; draped the bare bosom of the hills with grasses, guides the glacier, gives the snow and rain, is everywhere and All. And so the Christian meets his Father among the hills. Who has seen most and knows the mountains best, the Christian or the Atheist ? But another case, dear friends. Men listen to music, song, organ, viol, anthem, orchestra, or opera, as the case may be. You will find in cities crowds of well-dressed men and women who spend their evenings at musical entertainments. Indeed Fashion, that best obeyed of all despots, in these days affects music. Now notice the man listening to music, who does not believe nor live in God. He knows if it be correctly rendered, as to time, tone, expression, and the like ; he awaits those difficult passages which tax the musician's skill ; he applauds the surmounted difficulty ; he is soothed a trifle, he has been entertained ; he thinks he has heard the music and goes away. It is impossible. All that music says (and it is enough) is "God ;" His infinity, His eternity, His mercy, His love, His justice. It is the human echo of His name. They who do not

hear of Him in music, never hear music. I imagine the same hearer—a Christian. Music lifts his soul above matter, above life's frivolous fashions, above our human cries and clamor, above perishable things, and it becomes to him as the litany of angels, and the hymns that tremble and float in the still air of Paradise. Which heart has best understood the music? I have mentioned one of the fine arts. What is true of music, is true of painting, poetry, and sculpture. All art is only rightly interpreted of the religious mind. I refer to this in these days when a superficial and infidelic culture sneers at Christianity as barbarous and ignorant, to show you who aspire perhaps to the best culture; how art, science, learning can only be interpreted and reached by the light and thought of a Christian soul. It is Christ only who can lead you to the tree of knowledge, and in His company alone is it forever the tree of life!

I have thus shown you the superiority of Christian wisdom in the realms of science and of art. I must beg your attention for a moment to the fact that this is equally true in the realm of human life. Now you all live in a civilized society, whose elements are strangely mixed and confused. You are among men and women whose motives, whims, aims, intentions vary with every hour, and are modified by ten thousand unexpected, and, to you, unknown circumstances. The people who have inspected most carefully the movements of the human mind, all agree that they are often unaccountable and uncontrollable. You wish then to live well among your fellow men, that is, you wish to give them all their rights, and have them give you all your rights; and especially you wish to protect yourself against all wrong or hurt at their hands. In order to do that you must know how to deal with them. Religion gives you

that knowledge. You hear it said of a person : "He knows the world," meaning of course that he knows how men behave, and how to protect himself against their misbehaviors. No man that is not a Christian can ever rightly know the world in that sense. It is plain that religion teaches you at least one half of the way of living well, as we defined above, by leading you to give every man his due. It aids you moreover to obtain from every man your dues by the armor of defence against wrong to you, with which it envelopes your whole life. I will explain at once. You know people perhaps who contrive ; men and women who are always providing against the traps, wiles, ruin, and evil which they imagine their enemies are plotting against them, by setting other snares of secret craft and malice over against them to entrap them in their ways. These are they who manage. Now the Christian has no wish nor need to do this. He defends himself, but remaining as he is, a Christian. He overcomes wiles, lies, intrigue, and calumny, by the simple, steady power and weight of his discipleship. He lives down wrong. It is a most subtle and blessed law by which Christ protects His own. For you may find a simple, open Christian heart surrounded by enemies ; and wherever you find it, you will find it canopied and guarded from defeat or peril. An evil man must always overwatch his own life and actions. The Christians will take care of themselves, because they are kept of God. Christians have been often assailed by wrongs ; never once in the whole world have they ever been overwhelmed. What better guide and shield can you have then against the world than the Christian wisdom ?

3. I venture to ask you to allow me, dear friends, to show you how religion gives you three other supreme and rare blessings. They are these : Liberty,

Victory, and Catholicity. Believe me these words mean three solemn things to you, and listen while I prove it. Religion then is the only liberty. Now while all men desire to be free, most men are slaves. They are slaves, because they have not been made partakers of the liberty which is in Jesus Christ. Now a man is a slave who is under the control of a master who has no moral right to rule him. You do not think you are a slave because you must obey a gentle and reasonable parent, since your conscience tells you you ought to obey such. You are too wise to think that you are only free when you can do anything you choose. That is not freedom, but licentiousness. The universe exists only by obedience ; but of that there are two kinds : a slavish obedience, whenever we submit to a power which has no right to control us ; a manly and free obedience, when we obey that which has a right to be obeyed. It is no disgrace to submit to a law where the lawgiver has the moral right to enact it. If I were not afraid of confusing your minds with abstruse statements, I should tell you that God Himself is under the law of His own existence, since, as Scripture tells us, God *cannot lie*.

Now while we cannot serve two masters, we all of us must serve *one* of two masters. Our choice lies between the world and God. Now as soon almost as you were born, the world undertook to get control of you. You were born perhaps in a poor family, and could not have what you wanted or what you needed ; or yours was not a Christian family, and, without fault on your part, you did not receive Christian nurture, and the world stepped in at once to give you worldly tastes, thoughts, habits, and to make you its menial. It saw, with its eye of mischief, the germs of low appetites and passions in you ; it began at once to gratify them. Its scaven-

gers brought you the husks and rinds of sins, and they looked to you delicious fruits. If you listened long enough to the syren notes of its bewildering falsehoods, as in the old Homeric fable, you would be turned to swine. You think this picture of your soul's danger overdrawn. Ask the Christians who know the world if it is not accurate. Suppose you are left to yourself, what then? At first you think, "I will resist evil, I will deny my passions." But passions that never sleep accompany you night and day. They clamor in your very soul, echoes of the serpent's voice in Eden when our first parents fell. You listen till they weary you, and they are not weary; you resist; but without God human passion is stronger than human virtue. You grow weak, you hesitate, you take them to your heart, you are a slave and doomed. Is there any escape from this? you ask. I answer, the one escape of the cross of Jesus Christ. Are there none to lift you out of your chains? The one hand able to do it is a hand nail riven!

How then shall you acquire your liberty? I answer, strangely perhaps, and say: "By losing it." Or, rather, you lose what men call freedom, self-will, self-direction, self-reliance, when you submit to Jesus Christ, and you acquire that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Now you confess that this matter of liberty or slavery is of vast importance to you. The aspiration for liberty is always deepest in young hearts. You cannot bear, young people, to be the slave of any one. Now it is this very aspiration, in itself acceptable to God, which, if misdirected, becomes your curse; but which, if led in the way of the cross, makes you rich with a priceless liberty. Observe how the people around you prove this. Here is a man who has the vice of drunkenness. Follow him hour by hour and day and night, and

you will find how that vice rules that man with a relentless cruelty, surpassing that of Eastern despots. All vice is despotism. The cross alone can break such chains. It is Christ entering our hearts, who alone preoccupies them against devils, or can drive them out.

I have shown you already how poverty, one of the accidents of this world, though often a providence of God, hampers and rules one's life. A godless man is very poor, and he lives as a poor man, coarsely or in rags. He has no Christ to bear his burden with him, or to render his lot respectable and durable. He goes through life enslaved to his miseries. A Christian man is poor, and want presses upon him, but under that pressure a Divine hand supports him, and faith leads him, burdened by this world's needs, to the fullness of that next world of which he is citizen and heir. In his hovel is Christ's home; and where the king dwells, the palace is. His dignity is of one destined to wear a crown. He wears his poverty, and under the shelter and true glory of what men think a grovelling want, he grows rich with those heavenly treasures that are already his own by faith. Again, it often happens that we are, in measure, under the control of people who are harsh and unjust masters. We suffer from their caprices, tempers, and lack of conscience. Our case under such abuse seems miserable. Perhaps it is an unreasonable parent who afflicts us, or a harsh teacher or guardian. Now how shall we escape being their slaves? I answer, by becoming children of the cross. The Christian submits to the cruel master, in order to obey the rule of Jesus Christ, which is the most perfect justice. He bears wrong, not because it is wrong, or his tyrant has any right to exact it, but because Christ has bid him suffer for His sake, and in obeying him who has a right to

rule, he gains true liberty, which we have shown to be simply obedience to God, who has a right to rule us.

4. Religion makes a soul victorious. Now most of you, dear friends, have set out to accomplish certain things in life, and you wish to succeed. Some of you wish to be rich or famous, or to live in great houses, or achieve some great discovery or adventure which you dream of; all, I hope, wish to be successful and honorable in high and true things. You have the right to aspire to this world's good, on this single condition, that you first of all submit your lives to Jesus Christ, and desire supremely to live and fare as He may order. This choice, also, of Christian discipleship is your only but sufficient safeguard against defeat. For see how often men fail to get what they desire. How many men miss gaining fortune, renown, success over their fellows, in almost any path of life which they have chosen? It is inevitable that only a few should gain that success which all covet. The unchristian man misses his worldly aim, and he has lost everything. He ventured his life upon a cast for temporal things, and the venture went against him. He is defeated at the very centre of his life in a defeat overwhelming, bitter, hopeless. He has spent his life to miss his aim, and now neither life nor aim remain to him. He is a moral and eternal bankrupt. The Christian man fails of the same things in life. But the supreme aim that controlled in him everything else, was to be Christ's servant, and that aim he still retains, and goes on to perfectly attain it. He has lost wealth, which his religion made an accident, but he retains his faith and life, which alone are essentials to him. His life is therefore, and cannot cease to be, successful. I might show you how this same fact holds good in all your other human affairs; how that religion

teaches you to conquer sorrow, pain, death, all losses and pangs whatsoever, which, without Christ to aid, conquer and crush us down. I must point you, however, for an instant to that conquest of the Church, which, as her children, belongs to all Christians. Now you hear many things said in these days about progress, philanthropy, reform. You yourselves, inspired by the generous, unselfish ardor of youth, wish to put forth your hand to assist, comfort, and raise the miserable or the wronged out of their distress. You find around you schemes and parties who undertake to reform the world by mutual association and effort. These may maintain a temporary life, and even do real good. But the Church is the undying champion of humanity, and the mother of all wise and lasting philanthropy. Hers is the key that unlocks the gates of the everlasting justice for all mankind. Hers is the sword that achieves the victory of faith and right over the legions that assail and trample upon human nature. The key is the cross that shelters under it all for whom Christ died. The sword is the undying power of the Holy Ghost, subjecting men and nations to the gospel of Christ's "Sermon on the Mount." Members of a victorious Church, which alone endures, because she alone, of all visible things, is built upon the Rock, and aspiring to achieve the victory over all that hurts your fellow man, you conquer with the Church. You have read how many men and women in past ages have died for Christ. So many were they who died for man, and to each God gave a crown. The Church is not only organized philanthropy; she is also organized conquest. Christianity is predestinated victory.

5. I have in the last place to bring to your notice, dear friends, how religion makes you Catholic men and women. By that I mean that religion rounds,

develops, arranges in a wise harmony all the elements of our souls, and helps make us not one-sided and fragmentary men and women, but in one word perfect men and women. All this has been implied in the preceding argument. I say all, when I declare that religion makes us the men and women God would have us. Religion is the Divine order of our education into that. Now you will find men whose character seems to display great virtues. The heathen, like Socrates and Plato, of whom you have heard so much, are examples of what I mean. You will find the same type of character in irreligious men of science or of literature. I venture to affirm that wherever the virtues of these men are examined, you will find them to be fragmentary, and without the healthy juices of a full and rounded life. The root of all virtue is in the cross. It is true that you will find Christians who are one-sided and narrow people, without breadth of thought, or charity of judgment, or love for man, or sincere and earnest loyalty to the beautiful and blessed things of God. This is only because they are half religious, and Christ occupies only the outer door courts of their hearts. So far as they are Christians, they are Catholic, as I have before explained. The Church is the Lord's garden, and in it alone we grow up to the perfect stature of men and women in Christ Jesus.

I have thus pleaded with you, dear friends, in behalf of confirmation as a rite in the Christian Church. If you have followed the argument, you have seen it to be a plea for your happiness and your salvation. It can at least claim therefore your friendly regard. I have omitted to say many things about confirmation, as to its antiquity and authority from Scripture and the ancient practice of holy men and the apostles. I have not quoted often from Holy Writ to

prove my positions, nor to show you how all revelation means and warns you that you must live in Christ's Church on peril of losing your own soul ; for I address those who admit the doctrine, and who yet, by some strange fatality, neglect what they well know to be their duty. I have passed by mostly those solemn arguments derivable from God's will and Christ's atonement, and the solemn element of our future life, which you will find elsewhere urged upon your consciences. I have touched before you upon the most solemn problem of the ages—the salvation of a human soul—your soul. I have scooped up, as it were, a handful of water from the great sea, and shown you how clear and life-giving and delicious it is ; but the solemn, shadowy sea of your eternal destiny, and the atonement of the cross that rules it, either for your eternal life receiving it, or your eternal death rejecting it, I have in no wise been able to disclose to you.

In parting from you, dear friends, forever to be unknown to me, perhaps, I wish for you all beautiful and blessed things. I would therefore have persuaded you to the cross of Jesus Christ in confirmation. I must leave you and these words to God. I will not dare to urge you any farther. I will be silent. When I am silent other voices salute and pray you. They are the voices, maybe, of some sainted mother, of some dearly beloved friend. They say ; "Accept Christ's cross in confirmation." The saints and martyrs of the Church address you : "Accept the cross." The prophets and holy men of old address you : "Accept the cross." The good angels that over-watch you whisper : "Accept the cross." The Lord who died for you on Calvary stands beside you, and you hear that ancient Scripture, which is your invitation to the New Jerusalem of Christ's Church : "And the Spirit and the bride

say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." He holds out to you His cross. Will you accept it or reject it? It is God alone who hears your answer!

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REMARKS
ON
CONFIRMATION,

OR

DUTIES OF PASTORS AND PEOPLE,

IN REFERENCE TO THE

USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE following remarks on *Confirmation and the Use of the Means of Grace*, extracted from the last Annual Address to the Convention of the Diocese of New-York, are republished in the form of a tract, at the suggestion of brethren whose judgment seemed entitled to consideration—with the addition of only a few words to make it useful, if it may be so, to the laity as well as to the clergy. To every thoughtful person who remembers that he has a soul to save, a God to glorify, an eternity to provide for, who covets the grace, mercy and peace which God alone can bestow, these few hints on the way of duty and of life are affectionately commended. Lay them seriously to heart, and act at once on the conclusions to which they conduct you.



ON CONFIRMATION,

AND

The Use of the Means of Grace.

I MAY venture to presume that the reader, who looks at this tract, is considering, or is willing to consider, his duty to God and to his own soul. You know that you are not your own. You know that you are bound to present yourself, body and soul, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, in a life made conformable to His Will. You know that there is a way of being made more holy, more acceptable to God, more serene and peaceful as well as more useful in this life, and more meet for death, judgment and eternity. You know there are those who seem to walk continually in the sunshine of God's favor, cheerfully enjoying the good things He bestows, or bearing the trials He sends in this life, and looking forward with the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope to the blessedness of an eternal inheritance in the life to come.

Perhaps you are touched with a grateful sense of God's goodness to you, and are looking about for some way of devoting yourself to His service.

Perhaps heavy trials have opened your eyes to the vanity and misery of this life, considered as the only good ; and immortal instincts, striving within you, make you feel that God alone, through Christ, can give you the unsearchable riches which you need.

Perhaps you are *young*, just beginning to reflect deeply on yourself and on the world now opening before you—and, moved by wisdom from above, you wish to give your young heart to the God of your life, and to walk from the first in those ways, which He has made ways of pleasantness and peace.

Or, perhaps, by far the happiest lot of all, you have long known, from the instruction of your parents and pastor, that, through the mercy of God, you were early made in holy baptism a child of His, and a member of His Church—washed from the original stain of sin, quickened by His Spirit, and received into His family, so that all His blessings and privileges are open to you, so soon as you are old enough to enjoy them, and have the heart to desire and seek them.

If you are in this last case, you will not need many words to convince you that it is your duty and your privilege to *go on unto perfection*, to stir up the spiritual gift that is within you by prayer, by the reading of God's Word, by efforts to make your way more perfect before Him ; and so to prepare to avail yourself at once of those outward and visible means, (confirmation and the Lord's Supper,) which are appointed of God for increase of grace and nourishment of your spiritual life.

Now which ever of the foregoing cases may be yours, my dear reader, there are two or three *truths*, which you very much need to consider seriously:

1. Some persons imagine that they escape a certain portion of responsibility by making no vows, entering into no religious engagements. This is a grievous mistake. You are *born in a Christian country*, and all the responsibilities of Christians rest upon you, and you will be judged by them, whether you acknowledge them or not. The child finds himself, by the very fact of his birth, standing in a certain relation to his human parents, owing them certain duties, about the performance of which he has no choice. They are imperatively binding upon him. The same is true of your relation to your Heavenly Father. You are His by creation, by preservation, by redemption, by infinite kindnesses; and you must devote yourself to Him in a loving obedience, or you must take all the consequences of deliberate disobedience.

2. Some persons speak as if they *could not move*—as if they were not able, and were not worthy to take any decisive step in the way of religious duty.

This is a delusion. The way is open before you. Christ died that your sins might be forgiven, and that you might have spiritual life and grace to advance in the way of holiness, and to work out your own salvation. The Holy Spirit is now striving with you, ready to help your feeblest endeavor—and you *may* dedicate yourself wholly to God, and have every blessing from Him at once, *if you will!*

—*if you will!* God in his mercy has set your *will* free, and you must use your freedom to *will thoroughly, unreservedly*, to live unto Him.

You may feel that you are cold, blind, unworthy to draw near to God, or to have Him draw near to you; but enter into your chamber; prostrate yourself before Him; confess your sins and short comings; implore his forgiveness; implore Him for Christ's sake to receive you, miserable and unworthy as you are; and then, with all humility and thoughtfulness, with full purpose of heart, with deep sincerity, resolve and give yourself up from that moment to the obedience of Christ, in the heart and in the life, determining to be guided by the advice of your spiritual pastor; and you will quickly perceive unwonted peace and satisfaction dawning within you, especially as you continue daily to pray in secret, to meditate a short time on some words of the Holy Gospel, and to strive to bring your heart and life more into conformity to the spirit of the Gospel. Do these things in earnest at once, looking continually to God for guidance, and seeking the counsel of your pastor in regard to details of duty, and you will not be long in seeing your way clear to every duty and every privilege in the Church of God.

3. Some persons seem to hesitate and stumble in the matter of religious duty because they do not see precisely what they have to do in the way of *outward instrumentality*. They do not see how much depends on a faithful use of the visible things of God's Church. The promise of salvation is not simply to him that *believeth*; but to him that be-

lieveth, and is baptized! There is something *outward* in the *Church*, to be done, as well as something *inward*, in the *heart*, before God's grace and mercy can fully descend upon us. And this two-fold character of our holy religion, (the inward and outward,) runs through every part of it. If you are to be saved at all, it must be in the way of God's appointment. You must do the outward things He requires, as well as the inward.

However it may be with others, who are far removed from the privileges of God's Church, yet for you, who are near it, and perhaps already in it, the welfare of your spiritual life is tied down to certain *conditions*. As the natural life cannot be preserved without the use of certain outward appointed means, such as food and clothing, so cannot the spiritual life be confirmed and matured without the use of certain outward and visible means of grace: such as baptism, confirmation, the holy communion, participation in the public worship of God's Church, &c., where they can be had.

These means of grace are by nature *common acts and elements*, of no virtue or efficacy in themselves, and of use only as they are appointed of God, and have His blessing annexed to them, when faithfully received. The waters of Jordan would have been useless to Naaman, but that God was pleased to attach His especial blessing to them for a particular purpose. So with the clay with which our blessed Lord anointed the eyes of the blind. We see, then, that common things, such as water in baptism, laying on of hands in confirmation, and bread and wine

in the Holy Eucharist, may be made the means of conveying spiritual blessings to the humble, if expressly appointed of God for that purpose.

These holy ordinances, then, are among the very first things you ought to think of, when you are proposing to enter more fully upon a religious life. Add to the secret resolutions already mentioned *an immediate preparation for confirmation*, or whatever other holy ordinance you yet lack, and to that end consult at once your pastor.

Here, then, are definite steps toward the working out of your salvation, which, (if you are sincere,) you can take at once. Enter into your chamber for a secret act of self-dedication to a holy, religious life, and then go forth to seek your pastor, that he may show you what else you must do.

Do not expect too much in the way of *light* and *comfort* before you have fully committed your way unto the Lord. If you bend all your will to serve and please Him in newness of life, and advance confidently in the way of His commandments, He will keep nothing back from you. The unseen path will open before you; and as the lepers, who went, in obedience to the command of our Lord, to show themselves unto the priests, were healed as they went, so you, in the very act of obeying your Lord and Saviour in faith, will begin to perceive that you are being cleansed and strengthened, and renewed in the spirit of your mind.

You may feel that you are imperfect, unworthy; of course you are so, absolutely considered in yourself; but if you are in earnest in desiring to

live as a child of God, your unworthiness is freely accepted for the infinite worthiness of your Saviour, Christ. He came into the world to save sinners. When they seek salvation angels rejoice; and the word remains for ever sure, that “a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.”

Earnestly hoping that you may find in the following address, and in the note appended to it, further hints that will make your duty plain before you, and animate you to the performance of it, I commend you to the guidance of that blessed Spirit which is given to every man to profit withal, and which is vouchsafed more abundantly to all them that obey God.

EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS.

Some very excellent and faithful pastors make quite a point of saying that they “*never ask any one to be confirmed.*” This seems to me to be taking an unfair and degrading view of what is in reality a very elevated and momentous affair. If by the phrase, “*asking a person to be confirmed,*” they mean, as I presume they do mean, a mere mechanical importuning of an individual to take the outward step of coming to confirmation, in order that one more name may be added to the list of candidates to be presented to the Bishop—that it is done without reference to his convictions, or his ulterior intentions, and without any serious endeavor to instruct him, or to move his conscience—then, certainly, al-

will agree, that such asking of people to be confirmed is a wretched abuse of the pastor's office. It degrades the sacred rite in the estimation of the community, where such things occur; and in the eyes of all considerate persons, whether truly religious or not, it degrades still more the character of the Minister of God, who so lowers his aims from Heaven to earth.

But the very proclamation of the clergyman, that he never *asks* any one to be confirmed, implies an opinion on his part that all such asking must necessarily be of the unworthy kind just referred to. This is a very grave error; and it is an error which does great injustice to the views and labors of other clergymen, while it implies most mistaken ideas respecting confirmation, and respecting the *state* of the baptized but non-communing members of a Christian congregation.

Never ask a person to be confirmed! And why not? If a person belonging to our spiritual charge is living in neglect of a duty and a mean of grace, why not affectionately and solemnly put him in mind of it? If a child has been baptized in its infancy, with a promise on the part of its sureties, that they will take care that that child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he shall have come to years of discretion, and been sufficiently instructed as to what his godfather and godmother promised for him in baptism, and what his obligations and privileges are as "*a member of Christ and child of God,*" why should he not be moved, both by his sureties and by his pastor, to

take heed quickly to “make his calling and election sure,” by ratifying what has been done in his name, and by “also promising that, by the grace of God, he will evermore endeavor himself faithfully to observe such things as, by his own confession, he has assented unto?” Why not explain to him his great need of a larger measure of divine grace to fit him for the duties and trials of the Christian life, and exhort him to place himself in that position, inwardly in the heart, outwardly in the Church, in which he is required to place himself, in order that he may become a partaker of the heavenly gift? In one word, why not speak to a person about his soul’s health, in connection with confirmation, as well as in connection with private prayer, or the reading of the Holy Scriptures, or public worship, or the observance of the Lord’s Day, or repentance and amendment in any particular which can be mentioned?

We may safely affirm that that pastoral instruction is grievously defective, which does not lead the individual instructed earnestly to desire baptism or confirmation, or the Holy Eucharist, whatever appointed mean of grace he is yet destitute of. Whether we consider the commission and charge of our Lord to His Apostles, “*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;*” whether we listen to the first preaching of the Apostles, and hear

them directing those who would know what they must do to be saved, saying, “*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;*” or whether we observe the care they take to send two of their number from Jerusalem to Samaria, in order that the baptized may receive imposition of the Apostles’ hands for increase of grace; we shall be convinced that negligence in instructing the people in regard to the Sacraments, or slowness in pointing to them as the great means of grace, is to be learned neither from the adorable Head of the Church, nor from its first chief pastors. On this subject the Acts of the Holy Apostles are full of instruction; and to point to only *one* very obvious instance, it is especially worthy of note, that while the Eunuch of Ethiopia listens to St. Philip preaching Christ to him for the first time, from that wonderful prophecy by Isaiah of the Passion and Death of our Lord, opening to him the way of salvation through faith in a crucified and risen Redeemer, the very first words, so far as we are informed, in which he breaks silence, to make manifest the *faith* which God has wrought in him through that preaching, are words pointing to an outward and visible means of grace: “*See! here is water! what doth hinder me to be baptized?*”—a conclusive proof that the instruction of St. Philip has included very emphatic teaching in regard to Holy Baptism, as the only way of gaining admission into the ark of Christ’s Church, and becoming a partaker of its gifts and promises; and an

equally conclusive proof that Christian faith and love, when rightly instructed, are no ways inclined to make light of what God hath provided and enjoined, in the way of visible instrumentality.

May we not ask, would the Ethiopian have gone on his way in so full assurance of faith, with such holy joy, had he not been allowed, in a palpable outward ordinance expressly appointed of God, to testify the earnestness of his devotion to the faith of Christ crucified—to assume visibly, once and for ever, its duties and obligations—to comply with its primary conditions, and so to feel, on good grounds, that he had indeed gained possession, actually for the present, conditionally for the future, of its gifts, privileges and hopes? Had St. Philip preached Christ to him in a different way, and, working merely on his convictions and emotions, neglected to point to the open door—to the appointed means of grace—how imperfectly would the work have been done—in what hopeless perplexity would the interested and convinced hearer have been left!

It will be said, perhaps, that, in a Christian age and country, where the external things of religion are known to all, a desire for the outward sign will be sure to make itself manifested, whenever a deep interest has been awakened in the thing signified—that the great thing is to arouse the slumbering conscience—to engage the affections—to determine the will; and that the administration of the outward rite, whatever it be, may be safely left to the spontaneous call of the individual.

I should be the last person in the world to wish

to obscure in any way the great truth, that the supreme business of the sacred ministry is to deal with the hearts and consciences of men. But hearts and consciences are not rightly dealt with, unless they are moved to a due appreciation of the means of grace which have been appointed of God. Besides, it often happens that much earnest feeling is awakened in the mind of a hearer by the public services of the sanctuary, which comes to nothing, because no definite practicable way is pointed out in which the individual can act, with the comfortable assurance that he is doing a great duty, and gaining a great and essential gift. Many an individual stands still and does nothing, because he does not understand himself!—does not know how far he is prepared, and longing, in a blind way, to enter more effectually upon the way of life. Perhaps he doubts himself, and concludes that he is not fit for any decisive religious step, all the more certainly because the pastor does not approach him. He says to himself, in effect, if not consciously, "*The man of God is a judge of spiritual things; he knows me better than I know myself; and if he does not come to call me, it is because he sees that I am not ready to enter into the inner circle of privilege and blessing!*" It is sad to think of such a person being passed by, without any kindly notice, when confirmation is offering a precious opportunity, and when others are preparing to avail themselves of the blessed privilege. He is left standing without, confirmed in the feeling that his place is in the world, and not in the Church; exposed to the danger of losing

even that which he hath, and of living and dying a stranger to the comforts of religion, when, perhaps, a single word, spoken at the critical moment, would have sufficed to determine him to be not only almost, but altogether a Christian; would have sufficed to bring him into the family of the faithful, a humble but grateful and devoted servant of the Lord.

And, then, it is wonderful how many persons go on through life in a kind of dream; doing many excellent things; hearing the truth with a certain degree of interest and respect; having many serious thoughts, but intensely occupied with the things of the world; and who, owing to the influence of groundless scruples, to mistaken views of the way of life, or to a strange spiritual listlessness, never arouse themselves to take an earnest survey of their position, to form a definite purpose, or to take a decisive step. There may be prayer; but it is the prayer of those who dream, and who have no life or power to reach forth the hand for the blessings they enumerate. Where persons are living in such a state, a single touch from the finger of love often works a marvellous change in the whole inner life of the individual. A gentle question, a word of admonition or of encouragement, startles him, arouses him from his apathy, puts him upon considering that the Master is calling for him as well as for others, and that there is something which he can do and is bound to do, towards laying hold of the hope set before him. And, then, the eyes being effectually opened, and the heart engaged, a little

faithful instruction and prayer, with the divine blessing, suffices to bring him into the way of Christian obedience, and that, too, with a manifestation of fervent joy and devotion, which causes one to marvel why he should have remained sitting so long apart in a passive condition. For such backwardness in moving, other reasons may no doubt be given; but not unfrequently has it happened that it was for lack of some man of God to approach him with the true Apostolic call: "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!*" It was for want of some Apostolic Pastor to "take him by the right hand and *lift him up*," and gently help him over the obstacles that seemed to lie in his way.

It was well remarked, many years since, in a Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops, written by the then presiding Bishop of our Church, (Bishop Griswold,*) that, in all our congregations, there are persons possessed of many excellent qualities, who ought to be living in the full communion of the Church. They are, in fact, persons who only need to be persuaded that they are privileged to use the means of grace, who only need to be induced to come within the circle of blessing, and to

* In this passage is given the substance (as recollectcd) of some observations in the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops of 1841—the letter itself not having been seen for several years, when the Address was written. The entire section, which treats of the Means of Grace, is full of weighty truth, and the two extracts from it, which are appended to this tract, are commended to the serious consideration of the reader.

devote themselves, in a decisive act, to a life of Christian obedience, in order to be transformed into such devout, warm-hearted worshippers as we love to see compass the altar of the Lord. They are kept at a distance by timidity, by mistaken views, and sometimes, no doubt, by pre-occupation of mind and aversion to change; and being conscious that their obedience is imperfect; that, standing where they do, they have no warrant for thinking that they "shall receive any thing of the Lord," they are incapable of attaining to any warmth of devotion, and their attention is easily diverted to other things. But let them only find themselves within the inner circle of blessing, with encouragement to hope that they are permitted to take the children's bread, and sincerely engaged in the worship and service of God, according to the order of His Church, and the "comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope," quickens them, with the blessing of God upon their use of means, into newness of spiritual life; and their change of position is no sooner accomplished, than we recognise a change in their feelings, from apparent apathy to earnest devotion, from hesitation and doubtfulness to entire fixedness of purpose, accompanied with a holy content and thankfulness, which goes far beyond our best anticipations.

Much of this remarkable transformation is to be attributed, under God, to the change which has been effected in the position and action of the individual. From standing, as it were, without the circle of blessing, where every thing he did was done with a

certain cold respect, without the encouragement of any reasonable hope that he was in favor with God, or that his imperfect services could avail him much, he has been brought fully within the pale of God's Church, where a final act of self-consecration has put an end to all hesitancy and doubtfulness; and where the consciousness of rendering an unreserved obedience, and the comfort of using means of grace with a good hope of acceptance and blessing through Christ Jesus, concur with the spirit of all grace to strengthen him in his new course, and to fill his heart with love, joy and peace. And, therefore, to decide the wavering purposes of the individual, to engage him in the earnest use of all the means of grace, and so to procure for him the comfort of acting with good hope of the Divine favor and blessing, is to accomplish almost every thing. Of course, there must be faithful teaching and earnest endeavor, ever afterwards: there will be trials and conflicts; but amid them all, our hopes will be stronger than our fears, and the issue will, as a general thing, be such as to afford to the faithful pastor a rich reward for his anxious efforts.

Considering, then, the large number of persons every where to be found, belonging to the class just now referred to, it has always seemed to me, that a large part of the duty of the Christian pastor in such a country as this consists in endeavoring to move the timid and the apathetic to arouse themselves, and take their true position in the Church of God, and in patient, pains-taking efforts, to lift them over the obstacles which seem to them to lie

in their way. Confirmation affords one of the best opportunities ever presented of engaging in this blessed ministry. To explain at such a time to all what their true position is, or may be, as baptized members of the Church of God ; to endeavor to impress them with a lively sense of their duties and their privileges ; to move, if possible, the timid and the slow of heart to enter the open door—to ratify the vows of the Christian covenant, and to seek the grace which a merciful God has provided for them in His Church—in one word, to move them to be confirmed, if it may be with humble devotion to the will of God ; to do this seems so plain a duty, so momentous a part of the pastoral office, that no arguments can be needed to enforce it.

I should be very sorry to have it inferred from what has now been said, that there is any apprehension, on my part, of a want of zeal or correct views among the clergy generally, in dealing with the subject of confirmation. On the contrary, there are abundant indications, in every part of the Diocese, of more than ordinary activity, and that it is guided, for the most part, by just conceptions of ministerial duty, and of the principles of the Church. But the very great importance of the subject of confirmation to the interests of Religion and of the Church—the hope of correcting here and there some misconceptions, and the desire to bring prominently forward considerations which may be useful to the young and inexperienced among the clergy, have moved me to trouble you with these rather extended remarks.

It is a very high gratification to me to hear, as I sometimes do hear from the clergyman of a parish, that all the youthful members of a large class presented for confirmation have been receiving special instruction from him in Sunday School and in Bible classes, without intermission, from early childhood up to the day on which they came before me to ratify their baptismal vows. Such reports are equally honorable to the pastor and to the young persons who have shown such steadfast interest in the things of religion and in the instructions of the Church. The more such examples can be multiplied, the better it will be for the Church, and for the interests of true religion in our country. It is a hopeful as well as a pleasing sign, when the young are seen to be happy in gathering around their pastor, and when his countenance beams with benignant satisfaction, as he responds to their affectionate salutations, "*or guides their feet into the way of peace!*" As a general thing, the pastor's work is done effectually, just in proportion as he knows how to engage the hearts of the young, and to train them up wisely "*in the way in which they should go.*" What the Church always needs, and what this country needs now, almost more than any thing else, is a generation of well-catechised and well-trained children and youth—minds so thoroughly instructed in the elements of Divine Truth, and so familiar with the accents of Christian wisdom—hearts so imbued with right sentiments, and formed to right dispositions, that the errors and follies and passions of the times shall pass by them as the idle

wind. To form such a generation is the glorious prerogative of the enlightened Christian pastor, aided by the efforts of faithful Christian parents. "*The child is father of the man;*" and if any thing is to be done effectually, it must be done at the fireside, in the well-ordered school, and under the first hallowed influences of the Church.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

THE following are the passages in the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops, sent forth in 1841, written by Bishop Griswold, to which reference is made on page 16 of the preceding Tract.

"Because circumcision now avails nothing, you must not infer that the Christian ordinances are of but little importance—that, without peril to your soul, you may neglect Baptism, or Confirmation, or the Lord's Supper, or Prayer. By a *right* use of these means, as our Church teaches, and the Scriptures teach, your faith will be strengthened and grace increased. God has commanded the use of them, and they who neglect them must either think that they are wiser than God, or they must be in want of that faith which produces obedience to his commands.

"The ordinances appointed by our Saviour, Christ,

and administered by his Apostles, should not be viewed merely as duties, but rather as blessed privileges, which claim our thankfulness to God. In mercy to mankind, and to help our infirmities, they are given us as sanctified means of bringing us to Himself, and by which we may obtain His heavenly benediction.

"Your Bishops ask your attention to this subject, tho' rather, because in our visitation of the churches under our care, we are often and much pained in observing how large a part of the people of our congregations appear to be in doubt or undecided respecting the use of these means; how many of them live in the neglect of making an open and public profession of their faith in Christ and submission to his righteousness; and this we the more regret, from considering that not a few of them manifest a sincere regard for religion, and a serious sense of its importance. Their morals, too, and their lives in other respects are, in a happy degree, such as we desire to see in the disciples of Christ. They appear to have a reverence for God, and right views of the Saviour's character and office; and they show such benevolence and charity towards their fellow men, that we may say of thousands what Christ said to one: 'They are not far from the kingdom of God.' Our sorrow is, that they are not visibly in His kingdom. For reasons known perhaps to themselves and to God only, they do not confess Christ before men, and become members of His Church. While they so continue, they are not '*assured* of God's favor and goodness towards them,

and that *they* are members incorporate in the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.' Into a Church so apostolic as this, having a faith so primitive, doctrines so evangelical, a worship so scriptural, and other institutions so truly liberal, we might reasonably hope to see people crowding as doves to their windows.

"Our Saviour, Christ, sent his ministers to preach, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;' and, so far as we know of their acts and their history, they who did believe, immediately made that profession of their faith. It is also evident, in the Acts of the Apostles, that they confirmed baptized believers, by laying their hands upon them, and praying for the aid of God's Holy Spirit to strengthen them in the performance of their baptismal engagements, and enable them to 'lead the rest of their lives according to that beginning.' And it is the request and the command of your Saviour that you receive the other Sacrament *in remembrance of Him*, in a thankful and devout commemoration of His 'one sacrifice for sin.' In that Sacrament, you show forth His death—you manifest your faith in the merits of His cross—and your thankfulness for such unspeakable mercy. By faithfully receiving these memorials of his love, you are also authorized to hope for the strengthening of your souls by the spiritual efficacy of His Body and Blood, broken and shed for your sins, as your bodies are by the bread and wine.

"Some seem to think that the rivers of Damascus

are better than the waters of Israel, or that, if they live honest and good lives, they shall not be the worse for neglecting religious ceremonies. And who does truly live an honest and good life? Who loves God with all his heart, and soul and mind, and his neighbor as himself? Who has, in all things, done to others as he would have others do to him? In many things we all offend; there is none good but one. Christ died to save, and his Gospel is sent to call ‘not the righteous, but sinners.’ Are you so whole that you need not this Divine Physician? We might remind you of the inestimable benefits, visibly signed and sealed in Baptism, to those who rightly receive it. We might say much to you of the fitness and Divine authority of Confirmation, and the blessings which have evidently attended its right and faithful ministration. We might show that communing in the Lord’s Supper is a great comfort to those who believe in Christ, and that it strengthens them much in their Christian zeal. But is it not enough to know that it is the will of your Saviour, Christ, that you should submit to His ordinance—that He, who so loved your soul as to die for its salvation, has appointed his sacraments for your benefit? Such a Saviour, you may well believe, has not ordained rites which are unnecessary, or which may safely be neglected; nor has he required you to do that which is useless. Our wisdom, when opposed to God’s Word, is but foolishness. He has ‘chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.’ When some

inquired of Christ: ‘What shall we do that we might work the works of God? ‘He answered and said unto them, ‘This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent.’ We are to believe in Him as the great Prophet—as the Word or wisdom of God, by whom the divine will is made known to men, and as the only true Priest who has made expiation for our sins, and ever lives to make intercession for us. ‘Through Him we have access, by One Spirit, unto the Father.’ And we are to believe in Him as our King, unto whom all power was given in heaven and in earth; Him we are bound in all things to obey, and He is ‘made both Lord and Christ;’ and well may he ask, as he does, ‘Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?’

“While we disobey his commands by our actions, we deny that He is Lord—we rebel against Him.”

* * * * *

We “beseech you, then, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.” Consider well what you must do to be saved; how great is the peril of halting between two opinions, and of neglecting this great salvation. We would be ever cautious not to encourage an undue reliance on religious rites; but without the use of those which God has graciously appointed for our use, how can we hope to increase in grace and in godliness of living? “Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” We know well that you cannot change your own heart—that God alone can renew a right spirit within you. But He has

promised to bless your sincere efforts to know and do His will. "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find." While you are faithful to do what He commands, you may humbly hope that He will enlighten your minds and sanctify your affections. To him that hath shall be given. To those who "order their conversation right, shall be shown the salvation of God."

The kingdom of God, or His Church, is the spiritual ark, which Christ, the true Noah, has prepared for the saving of His house, and your safety requires that you be "not far from," but in it. The promise of salvation is to those who are within its pale. The sense in which, as St. Peter says, "Baptism now saves us," is its being ordained of Christ, as the entrance into this spiritual ark, where we are entitled to all the means of grace, and if we are faithful in the use of them, to all the promises to those who are "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven." As our Church teaches, "they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church, and the promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." We should use this and the other Christian ordinances as a manifestation of our faith in Christ, of our trust in His merits, of our hope in the promises of God, and of our submission to His righteousness. In the right use of them there is great comfort; for they are tokens of His love of our souls, and of what He has done to save them. **They are sanctified means of God's appointment,**

whereby we may draw nigh to Him in full assurance of faith, and obtain His heavenly benediction. When these ordinances are devoutly and faithfully observed, we may well hope that true religion is increasing. It is encouraging to all who love the gates of Zion, to see multitudes thus openly confessing the name of Christ; coming to Baptism, and bringing their children; renewing in Confirmation their Christian covenant, and regularly communing in the Lord's Supper. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

[No. 161]

THE

CANDIDATE FOR CONFIRMATION

SELF-EXAMINED:

WITH

QUESTIONS AND ADDRESSES

TO

MINISTERS, PARENTS, SPONSORS, AND OTHERS

BY THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.

ASSISTANT BISHOP OF VIRGINIA.

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DO YE HERE, IN THE PRESENCE
OF GOD, AND OF THIS CONGREGA-
TION, RENEW THE SOLEMN PROMISE
AND VOW THAT YE MADE, OR THAT
WAS MADE IN YOUR NAME, AT YOUR
BAPTISM ; RATIFYING AND CONFIRM-
ING THE SAME ; AND ACKNOWLEDG-
ING YOURSELVES BOUND TO BELIEVE
AND TO DO ALL THOSE THINGS WHICH
YE THEN UNDERTOOK, OR YOUR SPON-
SORS THEN UNDERTOOK FOR YOU ?



P R E F A C E.

SOME years since, the author of the following Tract published a sermon, with notes, on the subject of Confirmation. The sermon has passed through two editions; and a wish has been frequently expressed that another should be issued.

On reading it over with a view to this, it appeared to the author, that an abridgment and modification of it might render it more acceptable and useful. In its original form it is too lengthy for ordinary use; and the notes, though deemed proper at the time, are becoming less and less necessary, it is hoped, every day. The sermon and notes seemed desirable at the time, by way of explanation and defence. Many without the pale of the Episcopal Church, greatly misunderstood the character of this Rite; and some, it was feared, were too much disposed to misrepresent it. Too many, also, within the Church, entertained very defective views of the qualifications for receiving this Rite—views in which they were strengthened by the improper administration of it in times past, both in our own and in our mother Church. The author is happy in the belief, that each year is correcting errors in opinion, and abuses in practice, in relation to this Rite, and that in consequence thereof, many prejudices are removed. Many excellent treatises from gifted pens have contributed to this happy result. Still, as the holy Rite is repeated continually in the churches, and those whose thoughts are seriously turned to the all-important subject of religion, are ever asking for some tract or sermon to guide them in their self-examinations, it is hoped that some good may result from the republication of the author's sentiments on this subject, in an abridged and somewhat altered form.

As to the scriptural authority, for this Rite, and the history of its use in the Church of Christ from the earliest times, and the propriety of its administration only by the first order of Christ's Ministers, and the various benefits of it, we may surely leave the enlargement on such topics to the several Ministers, who must be greatly deficient in duty, if they do not properly present them to their congregations, when engaged in preparing them for the Episcopal visitation.

But although the necessity for explanations and defences is daily diminishing, it has not, however, so passed away, as to render useless, in this preface, a very few observations on some passages in the Baptismal and Confirmation Services, which are still stumbling blocks to some good and pious persons. The first of these is to be found in the preface to the Rite of Confirmation; where it is said “to the end that confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of those who receive it, the Church hath thought good to order that none shall be confirmed but such as can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and can answer to such other questions, as in the short catechism are contained.”

From this direction it has been falsely inferred that nothing more is required of the candidate than ability to repeat, with his lips, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to answer certain questions in a short catechism supposed to be only for children. A few words will suffice to show how erroneous this construction is, though seeming to be countenanced by the mere sound of some of the terms used. Whoever will read it over again, cannot fail to perceive, that there is the language of condemnation and prohibition in this preface, that there must have been some previous abuse of the Rite which the reformers meant to correct. The history of its reformation from the corruptions of popery, will teach the true meaning and design of this preface. It is well known that, in the Romish Church, Confirmation, accompanied by many superstitious ceremonies, was administered to little children at their birth, and immediately after Baptism. This the reformers considered an abuse of the Apostolic Institution, and therefore determined that none should be confirmed but such as could say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and understood a certain Catechism provided for their instruction. This was the very least requisition to be made; and that it was not intended to be a slight one, may be seen by reading the latter part of the preface and the whole service that follows. From these it must be evident to the candid reader, that the Church not merely requires that they be able to repeat certain forms, and answer certain questions, and have come to years of discretion, so as to understand what they say, but that they be fully determined in their hearts to do all the things unto which they are required to assent. And this they cannot do without the grace of God inclining their hearts to them.

There is also a passage on the close of the Baptismal Service for Children, which is liable to a similar misinterpretation. It is there directed that the sponsors shall “take care that this child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say the Creed,

the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and is *sufficiently instructed* in the other parts of the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.' If any persons are disposed to think this a very slight requisition, it would be well for them to consider what that Church Catechism is, in which they must be sufficiently instructed. It is said that one of the kings of England, on hearing some one speak slightly of the Catechism, remarked indignantly, "I would to God that every minister in my kingdom understood it." I fear there are many persons who now think or speak slightly of it, who have never studied it, and of course have no just idea of its meaning and merits.

Is it indeed a light thing to understand the Apostles' Creed, containing the sum and substance of all the doctrines of Christianity—and to enter into the spirit and true meaning of all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer—and to know the length and breath of the Commandments, and how they reach to the very thoughts and intents of the hearts—and to understand what is contained in the Baptismal Covenant and Sacramental Supper, and what are the holy qualifications for the same? Is it indeed a light thing to be sufficiently instructed in all these, and so to believe, and love, and do them, that the Minister may with a clear conscience present the persons to the Bishop, as those whom he believes to be worthy, in order that they may publicly utter the most solemn vows ever issued from the lips of man?

Let it also be considered that Confirmation is evidently designed to be an immediate introduction to the Lord's Supper, and not something about equidistant between infant Baptism and adult Communion. Now what are the qualifications for the Lord's Supper, as set forth in that slighted Catechism? "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins; steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, and be in perfect charity with all men." These, and nothing less than these, are the qualifications for the Lord's Supper, adult Baptism, and Confirmation. It is vain to attempt any distinctions. The several services used in their administration show that genuine, vital, practical piety is required in all.

If it be asked, why does the Church seem to address herself so particularly to the very young, of whom so much is not usually expected, when she speaks of Confirmation; it is answered, that any other language would have been most wicked and impious in her; for it would have seemed to consent that the very young either could not or need not be truly pious. She has great faith in religious education to produce early piety. She knows that God demands early piety; nor does she dare seek for less; but, at the time of their Baptism, enjoins it upon sponsors, whether parents or others, to instruct them sometimes in the

vows and promises made—the solemn vow—Promise and *profession*—and to take care that they be ready, at an early age, to renew the same with their own mouth and consent in Confirmation. And let it not for one moment be imagined that she only wishes them to be possessed of a certain piety which is supposed to qualify them for Confirmation, and is willing that they stop short here and draw back from the Table of the Lord. If it were so, then were the Church most guilty in requiring of the candidate for Confirmation, a solemn promise henceforth to obey God's holy will and commandments. Let us only suppose for a moment that the Table of the Lord is spread at the time the candidates for Confirmation surround the chancel, and that some one of those who have just most solemnly promised to obey all God's Commandments, should, the very next moment, turn his back upon that Table and disobey the last dying injunction of our Lord. There is something truly shocking in the thought, that any should thus solemnly promise obedience to the Lord in all things, and in the next moment deliberately without any sudden temptation, but in accordance with a previous determination, slight one of the most important and interesting institutions of Heaven.

Ought not the Ministers and the Bishops of the Church to see that this sin rests not on their souls? We are well persuaded that to admit to Confirmation those who are unprepared for the Lord's Supper, is just to fill the Church with an order of half-way professors, who will only be a reproach to it, and to the cause of true piety. Those who are thus admitted, for the most part do not feel that they have made any profession of Christianity, or come under any obligation to increased holiness; but have merely complied with a certain promise made for them, and showed their attachment to the Episcopal Church.

In the following reflections, suggested to a candidate for Confirmation we have set forth what we conceive to be the views, feelings and determination, which should be brought to this holy Rite. We have also proposed some questions to Ministers, parents, sponsors and others which, duly considered, will, we trust, contribute not a little to the beneficial use of Confirmation.

REFLECTIONS OF A CANDIDATE FOR CONFIRMATION.

OUR faithful Minister has given notice that in a few weeks the Bishop will come among us, and will then be ready to administer the Rite of Confirmation to all who shall be thought fit to be presented to him. According to his duty, as set forth in the Canons, he has been carefully instructing us in the nature of this Rite, and urging us to prepare for it. He has satisfactorily shown us its high claims from the Word of God, from the writings of the Fathers, the practice of the Church in all ages, and the concessions of many great and pious men not of our Communion.* He has

* The argument in favour of Confirmation, drawn from Scripture and the Primitive Church, may be given in a few words.

On looking into those ancient records, which God in his providence has permitted to be the means of conveying down to us a history of his Church from the time the inspired writers cease to bear witness, we find continual mention made of this Rite as following after Baptism. We read of it in the histories of the early ages, and in the records of their councils, as something generally practised and highly esteemed. As to its existence, we might as well doubt whether Baptism and the Lord's Supper were practised in those days; for the same books which speak of the latter speak also of the former, and the same councils which legislated for the latter, legislated for the former. On referring to the early writers we find that they trace the custom to the Apostles themselves, and declare that they practised it after their example, and under the impression that it was the divine will that it should be continued. They accordingly refer us to certain passages of Scripture, as, for instance, the laying on of hands by Peter and John, recorded in the eighth chapter of Acts. The modern advocates for the Rite appeal to these early writers and to their Scriptures. They say that Tertullian, who lived only eighty years after St. John, speaks of it as a custom universally prevalent in his time. "Hands," he says, "were laid upon those who were baptized, by benediction, calling for and invoking the Holy Ghost." They say that St. Cyprian, who lived only fifty years later than Tertullian, traces the origin of Confirmation, which was practised in the churches, to the imposition of hands by the Apostles. They quote St. Jerome also, of the fourth century, who says; "as for those who were baptized afar off in the lesser towns by the Presbyters and Deacons, the Bishop travels out to them to lay hands upon

set before us many advantages belonging to it, and especially addressed himself to our filial piety, and called upon us to honor our parents and sponsors by fulfilling a pledge once made in our behalf, when they brought us to be placed in the bosom of the Church of Christ.

No doubt remains upon my mind as to the high claims of this institution. The time is at hand when I must decide upon the part I am to act, and I now desire before God to enter upon a solemn examination of myself, that I may know whether I am truly prepared to "renew the solemn vow, promise and profession."

O that my God would assist me to do it faithfully.

I think that I do sincerely believe the religion of Jesus Christ, and that I am truly desirous to live as a child of God; but it becomes me, as the Word of God enjoins, to examine myself whether I be in the faith; since my heart is so deceitful, that I might be mistaken. Perhaps some transitory feelings may encourage me to hope that I am further advanced in the divine life than I really

them and invoke the Holy Spirit." They quote from them and the other fathers, passages showing that they had great faith in the efficacy of such prayers, accompanied by the solemn patriarchal, and Apostolic ceremony of imposition of hands. Now, however fallible as to doctrine the fathers may have been, however erroneous as to some of their opinions, it must be acknowledged that they were creditable witnesses to the fact in question. They could not possibly have been mistaken as to the existence of the Rite, the high estimation in which it was held, and as to the fact of its being traced to the Apostles. But the advocates of the Rite now, as of old, appeal to a passage of still higher authority as containing an allusion to it. They think that St. Paul himself refers to it, as a practice of the Church, in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he speaks of the "laying on of hands." It is needless to mention by name any of the eminent writers of our Communion who understand this passage as justifying the practice of the Church. I will only mention that the celebrated Calvin, belonging to a church which did not retain this Rite when separating from the Romish Communion, nevertheless approved of it, and said; "This one place abundantly proves that the origin of this ceremony flowed from the Apostles, but afterwards it was turned into superstition, as the world almost always degenerates from the best institutions into corruption."

The learned Theodore Beza, successor to Calvin, bears testimony, in his comment on this passage, to the Apostolic institution of this Rite, and speaks of "an explication of Christian doctrine, which was delivered to the Catechumens in Baptism and the imposition of hands."

So excellent indeed is the Rite, especially when viewed in its connection with the religious education of the young, and as a solemn recognition of the Holy Ghost, and the need of its sanctifying influences over the heart of man, that many eminent men of other denominations speak of it with the highest commendation, and heartily desire the restoration of it in its primitive purity among themselves.

am. Let me therefore take this opportunity of ascertaining what is my real state and condition before God, that I may either bless him publicly for having granted me his renewing grace, or else, finding that I am still in a state of sin and death, may seek deliverance without a moment's delay. Our Minister hath very truly told us that there cannot be a more faithful and heart-searching instrument, by which to try ourselves, than that Baptismal Covenant, which was used at the time of our admission into the Church of God, and by which we are all solemnly bound to a most holy and devoted life. At the interesting moment of my Baptism there was a pledge given that I should perform all that was contained in that Covenant; and it was solemnly enjoined upon those who presented me, to see that, at an early age, I should come forward and publicly promise to fulfil the same.

Let me examine what was done and promised for me. O, my soul, inquire into those vows which were made in thy behalf, when thou wast admitted into the Church of God, and the waters of Baptism were poured over thee, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

1st. It was promised that I should renounce the devil and all his works.

What evil being is this, and what his wicked works, that I must renounce them?

Do I really believe, on the authority of God's Word, that there exists in some region unknown to me a wicked and powerful spirit of darkness, who, gaining access to our earth, in the infancy of the human race, tempted and seduced our first parents, and has ever since, though invisible to our eyes, been successfully carrying on his evil designs against man? Do I firmly believe that so great is his power, and so entire the ruin he is capable of effecting, that one greater than he and all his evil race, even God's own Son Jesus Christ, must come to our rescue, or all be for ever lost? Do I think with horror of the apostacy of this evil spirit, and his awful wickedness in seeking to seduce and ruin man? Do I resolve neither to follow nor be led by him in this rebellion against heaven? Do I hate him and all his wicked works, and resolve by the grace of God to renounce and forsake them now and for ever? Do I truly desire to know what are his works, what the things in which he delights, and which he desires to promote among men, in order that I may abhor and flee from them, and have no fellowship with them?

Believing that he is the spirit which dwelleth in the children of disobedience, do I resolve to drive him out of my heart, by declaring war against all the evil passions and tempers of my corrupt nature ?

Do I here, this day, renounce and wage eternal war against these works of the wicked one in me—pride, malice, ambition, deceit, falsehood, envyings, evil speakings, and all other wicked things which are so offensive to God ? Even though I cannot drive all these evil thoughts and tempers entirely away from my soul, so that they shall never return again ; yet can I truly say I know how hateful they are in God's sight, and how I ought to abhor them, and I do desire and resolve to hate them and never to give way to them, and I do hope for a growing victory over them, through the grace of him in whom, when satan came, he found nothing, and who for our sakes trampled this foe of God and man under his feet ?

O my soul, canst thou say that thou dost most heartily desire thus to renounce the devil and all his works, whatever they are, whenever and wherever they have been, or shall be done in this or any other world ?

Then hast thou in this respect fulfilled the vow made for thee at thy Baptism ; and thou mayest, in godly fear, declare thy solemn determination to continue this holy warfare to thy life's end, trusting in the grace of thine ascended Lord.

2dly. But it was also promised in the very same article of the great covenant, that I should “ renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so as neither to follow, nor be led by them.”

And have I been brought by the grace of God to see that the world, that is, the evil men of this world, have departed from God, and followed the wicked one in his rebellion ; that they pervert and abuse the good gifts of God by intemperance ; that they love the creature more than the Creator, seeking their happiness in the things of time and sense ; that they admire pomps and vanities, and eagerly desire riches and honours, and freely indulge the sinful desires of the flesh—that in all these things they delight far more than in the love and service of God ? Do I believe that herein is the great sin and unhappiness of the human race ; and that, if the love of the world be thus seated in the heart, the love of God cannot be there also ?

How is it with thee, O my soul ! Dost thou truly desire to es-

cape the corruption which is in the world through lust? Art thou afraid of thyself and for thyself in the midst of so many temptations? Dost thou feel as if while here thou wert in an enemy's country, and dost thou resolve to pass the time of thy sojourn upon earth with fear? Dost thou daily pray that thou mayest not be led into temptation, and dost thou resolve to avoid, as much as possible, the society of the ungodly? If thou must needs sometimes be with them in the discharge of the duties of life, dost thou resolve not to partake of their spirit or follow them to do evil? Art thou resolved never to look to the world for thy happiness, but to lead an holy and spiritual life after the example of thy Lord?

Hast thou determined, by the help of God, no matter who may act otherwise, that thou wilt renounce all places, amusements and practices unfavorable to piety, and which, in every age, have been condemned by the Church of God and the Faithful? Hast thou duly considered the reproach brought upon religion by those worldly professors who attempt to serve both God and Mammon, and to be lovers of pleasure as well as lovers of God, and dost thou abhor the thought of being like unto them? Is it thy desire not to know how much of this world's happiness we may be permitted to seek, and how far we may go with the lovers of earthly pleasure, but rather how much of heavenly joy we may obtain, and how independent we may become of the poor joys of earth?

Hast thou resolved, also, as to all the sinful lusts of the flesh, all the evil propensities of this poor corrupt nature, that thou wilt resist them and not indulge and pamper them? Hast thou learnt that Christians have a continual contest to wage with those lusts which war in their members, and art thou resolved by the help of God to fight manfully against them, so that sin may not reign in your mortal body? If thou hast known these things and resolved to do them, then wilt thou vow, and, remembering thy vow, wilt not dishonour God and his Church, as too many do, by their vain, and worldly, and self-indulgent lives. But O my soul, thou knowest thy holy privileges better; thou wilt not follow their evil example; thou wilt resolve to avoid even the appearance of evil, and to follow only those things which are lovely and of good report. When thou dost approach the Altar of God, let it be to make an entire, unreserved dedication of thyself, soul and body, unto the Lord, and dread nothing so much as to bring reproach upon a cause so dear by any inconsistency of life.

3dly. But it is not enough that I renounce all the enemies of God and my soul, and all the works of darkness ; God requires it of me to believe his Holy Word. It is the truth from heaven, received by faith into the heart of man, which sanctifies it, and makes it meet for heaven.

It was promised at my Baptism that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed.

How is it with me ? Do I believe with my heart all that the Apostles taught ? Have I duly considered the full import of those words ? Have I carefully studied that creed containing all Christ's glorious doctrines, all that the Apostles believed and taught as necessary to man's salvation, and which has for so many ages been used in the Christian Church ?

Let me examine myself, and see whether so often repeating these words with my lips I have understood and felt them, for if I am confirmed I must declare my hearty assent to all of them : I therein solemnly declare my belief, not only in one eternal, self-existent God, but in the same as existing and manifesting himself to men, in a manner above our comprehension, in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Although unable to comprehend this distinction in all its mysteriousness and glory, do I yet feel and know that God is to me a Father—a Saviour—a Sanctifier ?

Do I not merely perceive the evidences of the power, wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of God ; but do I feel that he is a Father unto me, and is there the spirit of a child in me towards him ? Can I, and do I, look up to him and say, “ Abba Father,” understanding the first words of the prayer taught us by our Lord, “ Our Father, who art in heaven.*

Thus believing in the Father, do I also, having duly examined the evidences of his divine mission, believe that he who appeared

* It is said of the celebrated Luther, that on a certain occasion when instructing some poor peasants in the Apostles' Creed, he asked one of them the meaning of the words “ Father Almighty.” The peasant dwelling upon the word “ Almighty,” seemed lost in thought. At length he said, “ I do not know.” Neither do I, added the great theologian ; but we all know, he said, what a Father is. The eyes of the poor man brightened, and showed that in one word, that blessed word—Father—was explained the true meaning of the first article of the Creed. Happy those who thus understand and are able to realize it.

upon earth, calling himself Jesus Christ, was God manifest in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us, called the Son of God, equal with the Father, and assuming the human nature also, that he might suffer and die for us? Do I believe and feel that I am a poor sinful creature, for whose salvation it was necessary that Christ should die, that his death was the atonement required of God for my sins and the sins of all mankind? Do I hope for salvation only through the merits and sufferings of Christ, and not for any works or deservings of my own? Do I believe that as Christ died and rose again in the same body, and ascended up into heaven, and there liveth and maketh intercession for men, so shall his saints rise again in these bodies, which shall be changed and made like unto his glorious body, and then shall they live ever more with the Lord in heaven? Am I firmly established in this glorious truth?

Do I also believe in the Holy Ghost, the third person of the ever blessed Trinity, of whom such frequent mention is made in the Word of God, who, at the intercession of the Son, was sent down, and whose influences were poured out in such copious streams on the infant Church of Christ? Do I believe that without its renewing and sanctifying influences no soul can be made meet for heaven? Have I reason to believe that my soul has been changed by its blessed operation? Has it convinced me of my sinfulness, and enabled me to call Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour, to the glory of God the Father? Have I thus not merely become a member, by outward ordinances, of the Catholic, that is, the universal Church of Christ, but am I realizing the privileges of Communion with the saints of God, and with them have I fellowship with the Father and the Son? Thus let me examine myself whether I be in the faith.

O my soul, if thus thou dost believe, thou wilt not be ashamed or afraid to confess what thou dost believe before men. And if thou hast not already been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then wilt thou rejoice to be washed with the waters of Baptism; and if this charitable work has already been done for thee through the piety of parents and friends in the age of unconscious infancy, then, having come to the knowledge hereof, and been enabled from above to approve and love it, thou wilt delight to come forward and publicly declare thy gratitude

in the Rite of Confirmation, promising by the help of God to do all things which were promised for thee.

But I have yet to examine my soul on one other subject, where it must be right before God, or there can be no hope for its salvation. It was promised for me or by me at my Baptism that I would "obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." Can I truly and sincerely renew that promise, and resolve by the help of God so to do ?

Do I find that the grace of God has wrought such a change in my heart, that, whereas by nature I was averse to the laws and will of God, I now delight in them after the inner man, approving all the precepts of the Lord concerning all things to be right, and desiring above all things to do his will ? Can I without any reservation of mind, resolve to follow the Lord wholly, and keep all his commandments, and not merely such as may be more agreeable and easy to me ? Can I resolve to avoid all which is wrong, however pleasing to flesh and sense, and to do all that is right, whatever it may cost me ? Can I, and do I resolve upon this, not for a day or a year, but for all the days of my life, regarding it as an honour and privilege to be allowed thus to serve the Lord, and in the sweet hope that I may continue to serve him with the holy angels through all eternity ? Do I rejoice to feel that I am not my own, but one bought with a great price, and the entire property of him who purchased me ? Do I delight to act from the principle of gratitude to him who gave himself for me, and hope to be thus acting for ever in the presence of our once crucified, but now exalted Lord ?

Am I indeed already obeying ; or is this only a thought of my mind—a half-formed resolution, soon to be broken ? Am I in the daily habit of prayer ? Do I habitually read God's Holy Word ? Am I in charity with all men ? Have I abandoned all vicious practices, and forsaken the society of wicked and ungodly persons, so that in all these respects I shall not bring reproach upon religion ? Have I in very deed given myself to God, to "serve him truly all the days of my life ?"

O believe, if such be thy state, though thou art still very weak, and often weary and heavy laden with the weight of thy native corruptions, of thine indwelling sin, though thou dost often sin in thought, word and deed, though evil thoughts do sometimes enter

thy mind, and wrong feelings thine heart, and satan's fiery darts assault thy soul; still thou art welcome, thou art one of God's own dear children by adoption and grace, thou art one of those little ones who believe in Christ, and thou needst not wait until thou art stronger and better, but shouldst come at once, just as thou art, and thy vows wilt be heard in heaven. Though thou shouldst come in weakness, and fear and much trembling, thou shalt go away strengthened and comforted; thy Baptism shall be re-blest to thee; more grace shall be given unto thee; thou shalt be sealed anew with the Holy Ghost from heaven; the blessed Supper of the Lord, which is already spread before thee, will be a rich and delicious feast to thy soul; thou shalt hunger and thirst for it; necessity will be laid upon thee to approach towards it, and thou wilt beg even for the crumbs which fall from thy divine Master's Table.

Though the brief exercises for the candidate are over, it is hoped he will not stop here, but proceed to the following addresses and questions, in which he also should feel a lively interest. But it is most earnestly requested of all Ministers, parents and sponsors, who may put these pages into the hands of others, to read what is addressed to them, and, before God, see how they have performed their part in honouring this holy, and as we believe, Apostolic Rite. The exercises for all the parties concerned are printed together, that each may see what duties devolve upon the other, and so all be rebuked, exhorted, or encouraged, as they shall need and deserve.

A FEW REMARKS SHOWING WHAT EFFECT THE EXPECTATION OF THIS RITE WOULD HAVE UPON MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, WITH AN ADDRESS TO ONE IN WHOSE CONGREGATION IT IS ADMINISTERED.

The expectation of such a day of trial, would certainly have a tendency to quicken the exertions of each Minister, and make him look forward to it with anxiety as a day of joy or of grief, of triumph or shame to him. It would lead to a more special consideration of the case of all those whose Baptismal vows were yet un-renewed, and more particularly would it turn his heart to the young, for whom the service is so happily designed. It would

impose an obligation on him to make a special and more earnest appeal to all the unconverted, and to use all means for bringing them to serious consideration ; to exhort, encourage, instruct, warn, upbraid, and condemn, and thus make full trial of his Ministry. It would put him on more earnest prayer for his people, lead him to more heart-searching conversation with them, and thus make him better acquainted with them, and more useful among them. But, what will be the probable effect of the very occasion itself upon those whose work will now be made manifest ? Surely, while he is now rendering to one of God's unworthy Ministers some account of his stewardship, while in the act of presenting some candidates for admission to all the privileges of the Church, his thoughts will be led forward to that awful day, when he will stand with the people of his charge before the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls above ; and he will ask himself, how many shall I have to present to God on that day, as my joy and crown of rejoicing ? Surely he will be led into some solemn reflections on the fearful responsibility of the office with which God has entrusted him. He will remember the account which will be demanded for the souls committed to his care. He will remember the promise to him who gives himself wholly to his duty, taking heed to himself and his doctrine, that his profiting may appear to all, and that he may both save himself and those who hear him. 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. He will, with fear and trembling, ask himself ; if this be true, how can I hope to be saved, if any of my people be lost ? Must not mine have been the fault, and will not the voice of their blood cry unto God against me ? He will enter into strict judgment with himself, and inquire ; have I indeed made full trial of my Ministry in all those ways and means which God has made effectual to the salvation of sinners ? Has it been the most anxious desire and prayer of my heart that my people might all be saved ? Have I given myself wholly to this work ? Have I declared the whole counsel of God to them faithfully, fearlessly, yet affectionately ? Can I call them all to witness this day that I am free from their blood ; that I am in no wise partaker of their guilt ; and that I could have done nothing more, than I have done, to bring them to the knowledge and confession of the truth ? Especially will he examine himself as to the manner in which he has discharged his duty to the young, and to those who have the care of their souls. Have I exhorted parents,

sponsors, and all the guardians of youth to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ? Have I entreated them, have I warned them on this subject, and have I instructed them how to perform their duty most effectually ? Have I performed my part towards them faithfully ? Have I been a "teacher of babes?" Have I obeyed that most emphatic, affectionate, and oft repeated injunction of our Lord to Peter, "feed my lambs?" Have I delighted to take them in my arms, and present them by prayer to the Lord ? Have I fed them while yet babes, with the milk of God's Word ? As they grew up, have I exhorted them continually to remember their Creator in the days of their youth ; to seek him early, ever urging the promise that they shall surely find him ? Have I diligently used all those means with the young which, in every age, have proved most effectual ? Am I peculiarly happy when instructing dear youths in the blessed Word of God ? Have I also regarded all as children, whatever be their age, who are yet without the knowledge of true religion ; and have I, as far as they would permit me, dealt with them accordingly ? Have I, in all my intercourse with my people, when visiting from house to house, been seeking the same object, their spiritual improvement ? Have I especially sought to prepare them for an open profession of their faith, not failing often to warn them that so long as they continue in a state which unfits them for an humble declaration of their hope in Christ, the Gospel has no promise of salvation to them ; but, as they would not own their Saviour before men, they must prepare to be disowned by him in the trying day. O, my brethren what must be the feelings of an unworthy, indolent, faithless, temporizing Minister of the Gospel on such an occasion, when he who is placed before God and his people, when he asks for the fruit of his labours, for those whom he hopes one day to present as his joy and crown of rejoicing before the throne of God ? Ah, what must be his feelings, if he has none to present, or only those of whom he ought to be ashamed and whom God will refuse ; or if, perchance, there be some faithful ones, he is nevertheless conscious that it is not through his instrumentality they have become so ! Ah, what must be his feelings, when he is conscious that, neither in his private intercourse nor in his public Ministry, has he been the pious and faithful Pastor ; that he has neither instructed the children, nor entreated the parents, nor warned the ungodly, nor done any thing as he ought to have done it ; when

ne dare not lift up his eyes and look upon his people, for he knows that, in the face of every child, and every parent, and every saint, and every sinner before him, he beholds a witness of his unfaithfulness ; when he dare not look up to his God, for his own heart condemns him, and what can he expect but condemnation from him who is greater than his heart ! And, O my brethren, if he be not utterly hardened and his conscience seared, with what horror, must he look forward to that day, when he and his people shall appear in judgment before the awful tribunal of heaven ; when those who have died under his care, and died unconverted, unwarned, shall be summoned as swift witnesses against him, and when even the pious, who have lived under his Ministry, but are not “ his joy and rejoicing,” when even they cannot put in one plea in his behalf ! Surely, my dear brethren, if there be any thing which, under God, can awaken an unworthy Minister to a deep sense of his guilty and wretched condition, it must be such an occasion, and the due improvement thereof.

And now, my dear brother, in whose congregation I am performing this duty, and some of whose dear people I am soon to endeavour to pray for, to bless, and to exhort in the name of the Lord, suffer one word of exhortation from me. It matters not how zealous and faithful in all your duties you may hitherto have been ; you may, by God’s grace, be still more so, in the time to come ; and the more zealous and faithful you have been, the more gladly and humbly will you receive the exhortation. Those who have done most for Christ, and their people’s souls, have ever been most disposed to condemn themselves, and to think that they have done very little. At any rate, they have been conscious that they might have done more, and have therefore been very humble and sorrowful. Could I suppose that you, my brother, would be offended at the insinuation that you might do more for your people’s salvation, that you were so righteous in your esteem as to think no amendment could be made ; I should regard it as a most unpromising sign, and from my inmost soul would pity the people that had such a Pastor. But I am assured better things of you, and know that you will esteem it as the highest act of duty and friendship in me even here, before God and your people, to exhort you to be yet more diligent and faithful. Look at your people this day, and ask your heart if you have done all that you might have done for their salvation. Look over your congregation, and see if there

be not some for whom you have not prayed and laboured as you might have done. Say to yourself, might not some of those, who do not come, have been ready to approach this altar, had I taken more pains to prepare them for it? Look at the lambs of your flock, and ask, if you had fed and nursed them as diligently and bountifully as you ought, might they not now have been ready to be penned in a higher fold? Think also upon the more aged sinners of your charge, and see whether you have done all that you could by prayer and solemn entreaty, to pluck them as brands from the burning. Resolve, my dear brother, to begin anew, as though you had done nothing heretofore. Be more in earnest with your people. Redouble your effort. Ply every holy art by which you may win souls to the Redeemer. And though to some you may seem beside yourself, let the love of Christ constrain you; thus judging that if one died for all, then were all your people dead, and will continue thus, until quickened by the grace of God. On this subject give yourself and your people no rest. Do all that mortal man, aided by heaven, can do, to save every soul committed to your care. And God grant you the most abundant success! At each returning visit of him who is appointed to do this duty, may increasing numbers surround the Altar; and on the great day of reckoning, may you have the unspeakable felicity of presenting unto God, as your joy and crown of rejoicing, every soul entrusted to your Ministerial care!

ADDRESS TO PARENTS AND SPONSORS ON THE DUTY OF PREPARING
THE BAPTIZED CHILDREN FOR THIS RITE.

Holy, indeed is the relation which God has established between parents and their offspring. Great is the influence which he has given to the former over the latter, and great must be the guilt of neglecting to improve it. There is a docility and credulity implanted in the minds of the young, which inclines them to receive, believe, and do whatever shall be taught them by those to whom Providence has entrusted their education. And wo be to those who shall neglect to make the best use of this wise and gracious constitution of their nature. The Church seeks to do her part. At Baptism she solemnly dedicates them to God, then confides them to the arms of parents or other suitable persons, to be trained up for heaven, with most positive injunctions to do their part faithfully. In Confirmation, she sends one of her Ministers to see how those

duties have been performed, and what has been the fruit thereof. And ought it not to be an occasion of anxious self-examination to parents and sponsors? If the expectation thereof should fail to lead them beforehand to co-operate with Ministers in more special and more earnest prayers, instructions, and entreaties in behalf of their children, surely the solemnity itself must force some serious thoughts and painful exercises upon their minds. When the appointed Officer shall stand in his place, and call for all those who have reached the fearful age of discretion, to come forward and fulfil the solemn engagements made in their behalf, and when there are so many who do not rise from their seats to move one step towards him, what must be the thoughts and feelings of all the guardians of youth, but especially of parents? Will they not, then, (especially if moved to it by a few faithful words from him whose duty it is to speak to them,) enter into judgment with themselves, and ask, how have we performed our parts and duties? Have we, indeed, taught them, *so soon as they were able to learn*, what a solemn vow, promise and profession they once made by us? Have we continually been instructing them in the principles of our holy religion as set forth in Scripture, and those Formularies appointed for that purpose? Have we taught them all that they ought to know to their soul's health? Have we, in all their education, regarded religion as the most important branch, the one thing needful? Have we often asked ourselves the fearful question, what shall it profit, if we gain the whole world for them, and yet suffer them to lose their souls? Has the chief desire and prayer of our heart for them been, that they might be saved? Are we guiltless this day of their ignorance and indifference? Can we say that it is not, in any degree, our fault that they are not this day prepared to renew their Baptismal vows; but that we have done all that God or his Church could reasonably expect of us, to bring these our children to the knowledge and confession of the truth? Are we willing, even now, to appear before God and deliver up our charge? Happy those who can answer these questions, and not utterly condemn themselves? But where are they? Who are these faithful ones? Here, again, the most faithful are the most ready to condemn themselves? Let me propose to you a few questions. From the moment God gave these dear children into your arms, what has been your most anxious desire, your most diligent endeavour for them? Have you been seeking their eternal welfare above all other, things? Look into your hearts and see what is

your chief daily care and concern for them. Is it that they may grow in grace that they may be better and better prepared for death? or, is it not rather, what shall they eat, what shall they drink, wherewithal shall they be clothed? What are your most anxious thoughts and painful feelings concerning your children? Are they, lest their souls be lost, and they be consigned to everlasting shame and suffering? Or, are they not, concerning their condition in this world, lest they meet with sorrow, and shame, and poverty? What are your most pleasing thoughts, your fondest anticipations, in regard to your children? Do your hearts kindle into joy at the thought of seeing them kneeling around the Altar, or of hearing them renew those vows you once made in their name; of the holy and useful lives they may lead; the happy deaths they may die; and the glorious eternity which you and they will spend with the blessed angels, and in the presence of the Redeemer? Or do you not exult at the thought of the figure your children may one day make in this world; how learned, how eloquent, how rich, how honourable your sons may be; how lovely, how graceful, how admired, how caressed your daughters may be? Be faithful to yourselves, O parents, in this examination, and see whether your desires and endeavours agree with what you promised for them in Baptism. There are some parents, who, from the moment of making those promises, do the very reverse of them. They not only most criminally neglect the religious instruction of their children, thus leaving them in the hands of the wicked one, but their hearts are filled with the vainest thoughts and most unholy desires with regard to them. To sing, to dance, to play well on an instrument of music, to dress fashionable, and to trifle in vain conversation with the gay and the thoughtless: this is almost the only education of their daughters. To go to schools and colleges, to learn languages and sciences, in order to the acquisition of wealth, fame, or office, is the chief education of their sons. The piety of either sons or daughters is the thing least desired, least sought for. They are brought up for this world, and this world only. It is not to be expected that such should be prepared for this holy Rite. It would, indeed, be wonderful to see them; for their parents have never really desired it. And yet blessed be God, we do sometimes see such plucked by divine grace out of their parents' hands, like brands from the burning. Are there any of these wordly-minded parents present, whose chief desire has been to obtain riches, honours, and station for their children? It may be there are some such; and it may be

that the desire and prayer of their hearts have been granted. It may be that their children have prospered, that they are rich, honoured, admired, caressed. But it may be also that they are undone, eternally undone, and that the very things which were so eagerly sought for them, have been the causes of their undoing. Their fond parents have been their chief destroyers. While seeking for them the vanities of this world, they have utterly neglected the things which make for their everlasting peace. Their parents have been their worst foes. In all their wanderings through this wide world of sin and misery, though they may meet with many enemies and much unkindness, none can harm them like their parents, to whom God hath given such power to bless. Mere negligence in them may be perdition to their children; what then must be the crime of betraying them to the enemy?

My dear friends, I hope none of you are thus guilty. I come this day to receive your assurances to the contrary. I come in the name of God, to inquire concerning those children who have been dedicated to him, and on whom he has put his seal. The Church then delivered them back into your hands, with solemn injunctions to train them up for God, and at an early day, to bring them again before the Altar, that all might see how well you have executed the high trust reposed in you, and how well you have educated these children of the Church. Come forward, honoured parents, with your interesting charge, and present them unto God before this congregation. They have come to the years of discretion; some of them, long since. I am now ready to receive their vows, and a waiting assembly will delight to hear them, and God and his angels will look with holy pleasure. Again, I say, we bid you approach. Why do you delay? Wherefore this hesitation? Why do ye look thus one upon another? Wherefore this confusion? Why do ye now hang your heads and cover your faces? Have your limbs refused their office, or are you fast bound to your seats? Ah parents, cruel, negligent parents, have you not done this, or at least your full share of it? What if your children were to die, even now, and just as they are? Must they not perish for ever? But at whose hands would God require their blood? Let your hearts answer, this day. And let me now take leave of you, by entreating you to remember that awful day when you and your children will stand before the tribunal of one whose authority none can question, and whose judgment none will despise. And surely, of all the dreadful spectacles which the imagination of man can picture to itself, the

most dreadful must be that of irreligious parents trembling before the bar of God at the approach of their own wicked children, who are summoned to bear witness against them for their unfaithfulness, and soon to receive with them, from an angry Judge, the fearful sentence “depart ye accursed, into everlasting fire.” O what a sight, to behold them going away together into perdition! O what a sound, to hear the children, though self-condemned, yet heaping curses on their parents’ heads for having contributed to that perdition! O my soul, come not thou into their secret!

ADDRESS TO THE YOUNG, URGING THEM TO A SPEEDY PREPARATION FOR THIS RITE.

And have I nothing to say on this occasion to the young? Yes, dear youth, this should be a time of intense anxiety to you, as well as to parents and Ministers. You are now called upon to account for precious privileges. It was your happy lot to be born in a Christian land; to be dedicated to God in infancy; to have the seal of heaven impressed upon you; to be taken into the arms of Christ and blest; to be nurtured in the very bosom of his Church. Parents Ministers, and perhaps other friends have given you a measure of instruction in the great and glorious truths of religion. At the time of your Baptism, solemn promises were made in your names; and so confident was the Church that you would fulfil the same as soon as you were capable of understanding how good they were, that she has appointed an Officer to come and receive the public declaration of your sincere and holy desires so to do. I come this day to call on you to redeem the pledge once given in your name. Some of you perhaps have not received that strict attention or been subjected to that wholesome discipline, which the Church enjoined and which God requires at the hand of those to whom it was entrusted. They may have failed in their duty; but still God has provided such various and excellent means for your instruction as to leave you without excuse, if you are not prepared to give yourselves up to his service. He has given you his blessed Word, and called you by books, tracts, sermons and a thousand providences. Many, under less favouring circumstances, have become truly pious at an earlier age. This Rite of the Church is designed to speak in the most emphatic language to the young, and tell them that God expects them to seek him early, and has promised that they shall find him. There is, to each one of us, a fearfully interesting period when

responsibility begins. We know not what that period is ; and our ignorance of it ought to make the young most anxious to enter into God's service at the very first moment they are capable of it. I come this day, not to call upon all those who have reached the age of fourteen, of thirteen, of ten, or of any lesser age, to give themselves to the service of God ; for I dare not specify any age, lest God should have appointed an earlier, and lest I should encourage any to put off this first of duties a moment beyond the time when it becomes practicable, and when God demands it. I come to say to all, however young, who are capable of understanding our holy religion, that it is their duty to embrace it heartily, and that every moment's delay is crime and danger. My dear young friends, when you find that your minds are capable of understanding, and your hearts of loving, so many things here below, ought you not to tremble when you find that you do not understand and love the best of all things ? Many, we repeat it, at a very early age have become truly pious and truly happy in their piety ; and should not this make you very fearful lest, if death now seize you, your immortal souls will be lost for ever ? This we say to the very young ; but there are many before me, of whose accountability there can be no doubt. Their age and opportunities forbid the doubt ; and to them I have a word to speak, which I pray them to hear. For you and for your everlasting benefit, a covenant was made with heaven by those who dearly loved you. For richest blessings did they contract in your behalf and bound you to the fulfilment of conditions most reasonable and just, as soon as you should be of age to understand the same. You have come to that age. Are you ready to ratify and confirm the covenant ? Will you gladly discharge the debt, and bless God and your friends for all the benefits you have reaped from the same ? Will you honour your parents and sponsors in that point where, above all others, they desired to be honoured ? O, with grief and shame be it spoken of too many, that the first use which they can make of their discretion, is to refuse the covenant, to renounce all that was done in their name, to dishonour their parents, and to make them to be found liars before God ?—for all their solemn vows and promises are broken, and their children have chosen some other God, and not the God of their fathers. O, this is a grievous affliction to some parents ; for there are some who devoted their children to God in sincerity and truth, and the first desire of their heart is for their salvation ; and for this they have laboured unceasingly. Oh how many prayers have they offercd up to heaven

for them ! O how many tears have they shed over them ! And "can the children of so many tears perish ?" Yes, there are some hard-hearted children who can and do resist all the love and entreaties, and prayers of pious devoted parents. Perhaps there are some such present. And perhaps their poor parents are here with their hearts all bleeding and agonized within them, and they would give worlds, if they possessed them, to see you, O ungrateful children, kneeling around this Altar. But you will not come now, perhaps never will. Oh how great, then, must be your damnation ; how much greater than that of others. "Let me be any thing in the day of judgment, rather than the irreligious child of religious parents." But blessed be God, there are some happy parents here : for their children ; with pious hearts we trust, are about to honour them in the way, above all others, in which they desire to be honoured. Happy parents, happy children, happy Ministers ! Angels perhaps are hovering over this scene. Perhaps the spirit of some parent, who went to the grave sorrowing over an unpromising child, and fearing never to see it in the abodes of peace, is permitted to come down and witness the efficacy of prayer long since offered, and the power of grace long delayed, over that child "who was lost but is found," and now is ready to kneel and be numbered with the blest. Would that all parents present were thus happy, and all their children thus blest ! And why, O ye children, will ye not thus bless, and be blest ? Are you afraid of religion ? Think you that God is not able to make you ten thousand times happier than the world can ? Oh come and taste, and see how gracious the Lord is, and how pleasant and peaceful are all the ways and paths of true religion. Give yourselves this day unto God, and choose him as your everlasting portion. But alas ! I know too well that many of you will not do this. God is not in all your thoughts. You are going further and further from him every day. You are tearing yourselves away from his Church. You are severing every bond which once bound you to it. You are trampling under foot that holy instrument in which fond parents once gave you to the Lord. You are wiping the sacred cross from your brow, as if it were a dishonour to you. You are turning your backs upon the blessed Redeemer, and rushing headlong into the world. Oh wretched youth, what are you doing, whither are you going ? What can you expect but judgments and calamities in the course you are pursuing ? What if the holy Church of God were to deal with you in the severity of her discipline ? Would she not, as wise and good men have coun-

selled, proceed to pass sentence upon those who, nurtured in her bosom, and fed on her bounty, have made themselves outlaws, renouncing her authority, and abusing her goodness? Would she not, by some solemn form, declare you excommunicated from her bosom, and warn her yet hopeful young ones to beware the companionship of those who have impiously broken the covenant of their fathers? But she would not be unkind, or even seem to be so; she is still a mother even to her unworthy children. She would not drive them from her bosom, but would rather draw them to it by the cords of love. She would this day, by me, her unworthy Minister, say to those of you who are even now renouncing her authority, and fleeing away from her maternal arms, that wherever you may wander through this world of sin, you will find no home, no shelter like the bosom of a mother, no friend like that Saviour to whom she would wed your soul. She beseeches you to return, and declares that her arms are even open to receive you. And will you renounce even for a time, such a mother? Will you this day cut yourself off from her Communion, and choose this wretched world for your portion? Then go; but remember, no blessing from heaven above, or earth beneath, can go with you.

ADDRESS TO THOSE MORE ADVANCED IN LIFE, UPBRAIDING THEM WITH THE NEGLECT OF THEIR BAPTISMAL VOWS, AND URGING THEM, EVEN IN OLD AGE, TO OBSERVE THIS RITE, AND TO BE DULY PREPARED FOR IT.

But have I nothing to say to those more advanced in life: to those who are permitting year after year to pass away, and yet their vows are unrenewed? Is this Rite only for the young, at that interesting period when first they come to years of discretion, and if they choose then to neglect it, must we never more remind them of their duty, or upbraid them with their neglect? No, my brethren, at the occurrence of every such occasion we must warn them of their accumulated guilt, and increased danger. We must still speak to them of their dishonoured parents and sponsors; of the pledge that lies unredeemed; of the covenant that is broken; and urge them, however long the duty has been delayed, to confirm the holy contract made with heaven in their behalf. And should God in mercy spare them; should his saving grace arrest them in their sin, and overcome their rebellious hearts, at whatever time, no matter how late such a blessed work be done, this Rite

is for them, and well does it suit them ; for long as it may have been since they reached the years of discretion they have but just come to the right use of it ; they have just begun to live ; they are mere babes in Christ, and must enter the kingdom of heaven like little children. They must come with humble and penitent hearts, lamenting their mispent time, and praying God to accept the poor remainder, for their Redeemer's sake.

Let us suppose the case of one, who, on his first entrance into this world of sin, was taken by pious parents to the house of God, and there, by one of his Ministers, and according to his own ordinance dedicated to him amidst solemn prayers and vows. What if those parents should do this in the sweet hope that, at an early period their child would himself own this act, and renew this dedication ? What if in order to this, much pious instructions should be given, much holy discipline used and many, fervent prayers offered up. But what if all these should fail ? What if, at the time appointed, when the child has come to years of discretion, he should refuse to renew these vows ; his heart being utterly averse to the service of God ? What if, notwithstanding much upbraiding, he should pass on thence to manhood, and only grow more hardened in sin ? What if, through God's long-suffering goodness, his days should yet be prolonged, and extended even to the years of those beyond the flood ? What if the gray hairs of his parents should have been long since brought in sorrow to the grave ? But what if, at the very last, God's all-powerful grace should touch this aged sinner's heart ? Would he not, think you, look back with holy tenderness towards his parents ? Would he not remember their prayers, their tears, their instruction, their dedication of him to heaven, their vows in his name, the pledge given in his behalf ; and if there was in the Church some sacred ceremony by which he might publicly honour those parents and bless God for his Baptism and all the privileges of his kingdom, would he not delight to observe it ? Who shall say how far, even at that distant day, according to the economy of grace, the faithful dedication of him to God, his Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the fervent prayers offered up, the pious instruction delivered in his early years, may have contributed to his late conversion, and will he not take pleasure in reverting to that time, and those holy exercises ? The times and the seasons, and hearts of men are in the hands of God, and he can and does make the prayers of the faithful and the instructions of the pious effectual ; just when and how he pleases ; and

that which appears to be lost, is often found, though after many days. I find that some of the most eminently wise and pious have ever been disposed to ascribe their conversion, which took place at a later period, to the revival of some impression made on their almost infant mind by the instruction of pious parents, or else have considered it as the answer to prayers long since offered, and now made effectual. Nor can I, in this, see any thing either unreasonable or unscriptural. And now let me ask, are there not some present to whom this part of my address is too applicable? Are there not the children of pious parents here? Did they not sincerely devote you to heaven? Have they not laboured hard for you, and shed many tears for you over you? Have they not beheld your growth in size and age with fearful concern? Have they not, from year to year, been anxiously seeking fruit on you, their barren fig trees, but finding none; and have they not gone to their graves having one sting, only one sting, piercing them in death, the fear that they shall never see you in glory? Oh let me beseech you, call to mind their anguish on your account; remember all their holy counsels, follow their godly example; thus honour and revere their memory, and you may yet be blest. It is by thus improving such occasions, my dear brethren, that I think the Rite of Confirmation may be made subservient to the best interests of religion. It is calculated, I think to quicken the zeal and diligence of all who have any concern with the religious education of the rising generation, and to impress upon the youth that great and most fearful truth, that as soon as they become capable of understanding the nature of our holy religion, so soon does it become their imperative duty to embrace it heartily and practice it fully; or else they expose their souls to the most imminent hazard of everlasting perdition.

THE WISHES OF THE CHURCH, FOR THE VERY EARLY PIETY OF
HER BAPTIZED MEMBERS, AS SET FORTH IN THE BAPTISMAL
AND CONFIRMATION SERVICES.

Nothing can be more evident, either from reason or revelation, than, that at whatever moment a rational and immortal being becomes capable of knowing and serving God, at that moment the obligation commences, and not a moment later. On this principle is the office established. At Baptism sponsors promise for them

that they will believe the truth, choose what is good, renounce what is evil, at the first moment they are capable of it. In the Rite of Confirmation they are called on publicly to declare their determination to do all this. And can any thing be more agreeable to the will of God and our truest welfare, than that we, who are his by creation, preservation, and redemption, should serve, love, and glorify him at the earliest dawn of reason, and with the first use of our affections and talents ? Let us suppose that this peculiar and prominent feature was struck off from the system ; that the service was changed so as not to address itself so directly and almost exclusively to the very young ; that it seemed to aim at those of a higher grade ; that it merely demanded solemn vows and real piety, without saying to the young, of you these are expected. Let any one make some such change as this, and then let him look at what he has done. He will find that he has done that which is most gratifying indeed to the great adversary of God and man, which exactly accords with the views and wishes of mere professing Christians, which is the very doctrine of this world. What could be more gratifying to the wicked one than to leave him unmolested possessions of the young at the most interesting and susceptible period ? What could more accord with the views and wishes of worldly parents, than to seem to acknowledge that piety is not expected of their children at an early age ; what more agreeable to the maxims of the world, than to give a silent permission to the very young to resort to it for their happiness ? How different this from the language of God. He calls for praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. He encourages us to seek him early, and promises that we shall surely find him. He bids the young remember him in the days of their youth. Some, however, would have his Church dispense with this early piety, and permit the young to devote the morning of their days in the service of the world. But that she dares not do. As the holy mother of all her children, she loves them too well to consent that they should lose even a moment from the honour and happiness of God's service. She knows that in true piety is true happiness ; that the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden light, and may easily be borne even by her younger children. At an early age, therefore, she calls them to their duty, and leads them into the ways of peace and happiness. Instead of ushering them into the world to enjoy its vain amusements, or even silently permitting it, she warns them of its delusive snares, and at the very moment when

they are just ready to enter with eagerness on its pleasures, and when too many are disposed to encourage them "to give to their souls the desires which please them," she calls upon them to "renounce the pomps and vanities of the wicked world, and all the sinful desires of the flesh." It is needful that she should thus teach them wherein their true happiness consists, for there are too many of those who have the care of them that understand it not. They may indeed, at a very early age, instruct them in some of the forms of godlessness; teach them hymns, and prayers, and Catechism, and Holy Scripture, and seek to impress their minds with a sense of the truth and importance of religion. All this will they for a season; but a period arrives when it seems to be considered as a thing of course, as a matter of right, that these young ones, now passing out of childhood into early youth, should either lay these aside or at least not to be expected to act under their influence. Now, for a time at least, they must be given up to the world, they must be gay and thoughtless. Religion suits them not, and it is vain to look for it.

Perhaps at some future day, when the world has lost its power to charm, or when affliction sharply assails them, refuge may be sought in the consolations of religion. This is not the doctrine of the Church of Christ. At that very moment when parents and friends are surrendering them up to the world, she calls them to the higher enjoyments of religion; she bids them come and taste, and see how gracious the Lord is; she repels the insinuation that religion is only for the sick and afflicted, as a last resort when all else shall fail us. Moreover she fears even to seem for a moment to exempt them from the duty and necessity of piety, lest she should be in any measure guilty of their eternal perdition; and therefore loudly calls on them to enter at once into the service of God. She knows how many thousands of young persons are continually dying at that age of which we are speaking, when too many parents are permitting them, almost without a word of remonstrance, to turn to the world for their happiness. She knows how the hearts of those who have lost their children at an early age, have been wrung with anguish by the painful uncertainty as to the time when responsibility begins, not knowing what hope they might cherish. She professes not to know what that period is, but urges it upon all who have the charge of children to guard against the awful danger of dying in sin, by pressing upon them the great duty of religion as soon as it is in any degree possible to them.

THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION,

OR

LAYING ON OF HANDS UPON THOSE WHO ARE BAPTIZED,
AND COME TO YEARS OF DISCRETION.

¶ Upon the day appointed all that are to be then confirmed, being placed and standing in order before the Bishop ; he, or some other Minister appointed by him shall read this preface following :

To the end that confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it, the Church hath thought good to order, that none shall be confirmed, but such as can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments ; and can also answer to such other questions, as in the short Catechism are contained : which order is very convenient to be observed ; to the end that children, being now come to the years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in baptism, may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the Church ratify and confirm the same ; and also promise, that, by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavor themselves faithfully to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented unto.

¶ Then shall the Bishop say,

Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name, at your baptism ; ratifying and confirming the same ; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which ye then undertook, or your sponsors then undertook for you ?

¶ And every one shall audibly answer,

I do.

Bishop.

OUR help is in the name of the LORD ;

Ans. Who hath made heaven and earth.

Bishop. Blessed be the name of the LORD ;

Ans. Henceforth, world without end.

Bishop. LORD hear our prayer ;

Ans. And Let our cry come unto thee.

Bishop. Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY and everliving GOD, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the HOLY GHOST, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; strengthen them,

we beseech thee, O LORD, with the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter ; and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O LORD, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.

¶ Then all of them in order kneeling before the Bishop, he shall lay his hands upon the head of every one severally, saying,

DEFEND, O LORD, this thy child [*or, this thy servant*] with thy heavenly grace ; that *he* may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy HOLY SPIRIT more and more, until *he* come unto thy everlasting kingdom. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Bishop say,

The LORD be with you.

Ans. And with thy Spirit.

¶ All kneeling down, the Bishop shall add,

Let us pray.

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed by thy Name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven ; Give us this day our daily bread ; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us ; And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

¶ And these Collects.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting GOD, who makest us both to will and to do those things which are good, and acceptable unto thy divine majesty ; we make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom, after the example of thy holy Apostles, we have now laid our hands ; to certify them, by this sign, of thy favor and gracious goodness toward them. Let thy Fatherly hand, we beseech thee, ever be over them : Let thy HOLY SPIRIT ever be with them : and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST ; who, with thee and the HOLY GHOST, liveth and reigneth ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.

O ALMIGHTY LORD, and everlasting GOD, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments ; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

¶ Then the Bishop shall bless them, saying thus.

THE blessing of GOD ALMIGHTY, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, be upon you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.

¶ And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.

A

MANUAL FOR CHRISTIANS,

DESIGNED

FOR THEIR USE

AT ANY TIME

AFTER CONFIRMATION.

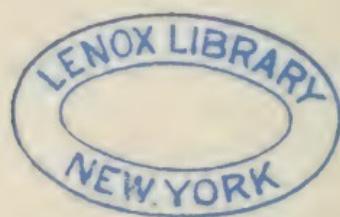
NEW-YORK:

NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY;

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MANUAL FOR CHRISTIANS.

I. On the Baptismal Promises ratified at our Confirmation.

1. For our own *sins* we have always been answerable in our own persons. Confirmation has made no change in this respect. Our sponsors, when they made certain promises in our names at our baptisms, took a new and serious duty upon themselves; but they had neither the will nor the power to perform our duties, or to answer for our offences. Many a man, indeed, can add to the sins of others, and thus increase at once his own guilt and theirs; but no man can answer for the sins of another, and every one *must* be responsible for his own. ‘For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST—every one of us shall give account of himself to God.’ *Rom. xiv. 10, 12.*

2. But the *promises*, which once were made by others in our names, we have now made for ourselves. And to what do these promises altogether amount? To neither more nor less than this—that we will be CHRISTIANS. No one can be a Christian who does not heartily desire to avoid what God hates—to believe what he has declared—to do what he requires. In other words, whoever is, not merely in name but in truth, a Christian, cannot but desire to repent of and forsake sin; to believe the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST; to keep and obey God’s holy will and commandments. The three promises are almost expressed by these three words, *Repentance, Faith, and Obedience.*

3. Hence we should have been *bound* by these promises, whether we had expressly made them or not. That is to say, we should have been bound to be *Christians*, (which is their true meaning,) not merely by any promises made either for us or by us, but by our having been born in a Christian country, of Christian parents, and having had the means of a Christian education put within our reach. God gave us these advantages, and will judge us accordingly. How he will judge a Heathen, who had no means of becoming a Christian, we cannot tell: but one who lives as a Heathen, when he might have been a Christian, a Christian not only in profession but in deed, has thrown away the advantages which God gave him, yet must surely be judged according to those advantages. ‘For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.’ *Luke xii. 48.*

4. But then undoubtedly this lot of ours is not a wrong, but a *benefit*; not a burden, but a *blessing*. It is the greatest of all blessings under heaven to be IN A STATE OF SALVATION:—that is to be restored to God’s favor in this life, and to have the promise of an eternal inheritance in the life to come; to have the means

of grace, and the hope of glory. But the only road to eternal glory lies through Christianity. ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me,’ said our Lord and Saviour. *John* xiv. 6. ‘God hath given unto us eternal life,’ said St. John, ‘and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.’ *1 John* v. 11, 12.

The better we understand these things, the more heartily we shall thank our heavenly Father for having called us to this state of salvation through JESUS CHRIST; and the more fervently we shall pray for his grace that we may continue in the same to the very end of our lives.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, whom truly to know is everlasting life, grant us perfectly to know thy Son JESUS CHRIST to be the way, the truth, and the life; that, following the steps of the holy apostles, we may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life; through the same thy Son JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life, give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavor ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

II. *On our Engagement to Renounce all Sin.*

I RENOUNCE THE DEVIL AND ALL HIS WORKS, THE VAIN POMP AND GLORY OF THE WORLD, WITH ALL COVETOUS DESIRES OF THE SAME, AND THE SINFUL DESIRES OF THE FLESH, SO THAT I WILL NOT FOLLOW NOR BE LED BY THEM.

In one word, then, we renounce SIN. But we do not renounce sin according to this promise, if there is any *one* sin which we intend to allow and indulge. The engagement is to shun, avoid, and strive against every sin and wickedness of what kind soever; to watch and to resist all TEMPTATIONS to sin, whether they arise from the *devil*, or from the *world*, or from the *flesh*.

1. Our own hearts are so abundantly disposed to evil, that the Scriptures often speak of THE FLESH as the spring of all wickedness. ‘Out of the heart,’ said our LORD, ‘proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.’ *Matt.* xv. 19. And St. Paul, ‘The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:—they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. They that are CHRIST’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.’ *Gal.* v. 19–21, 24. The affections and lusts of which the Apostle speaks, are the *sinful desires*, or *lusts* named in the baptismal promise.

But observe, any natural appetite or passion, though not evil in itself, becomes sinful, if it is suffered to become excessive or immoderate, perverted or depraved. Hence especially the common offences against *temperance* and *soberness*, in eating, or drinking, or sleep; and numerous offences against *chastity*, purity, and decency, in actions, words, dress, or thoughts.

Observe again,—almost every one has some *particular*, and perhaps *constitutional*, tendency to particular faults and sins: one to vanity; another to arrogance or pride; some to sloth; some to sensuality; one to anxious carefulness; another to careless indifference; one to credulity; another to doubt and distrust; some are more disposed to be angry, violent, passionate; others to be peevish, fretful, impatient, irritable; others to be sullen, or morose; some to be perverse, froward, wayward, or obstinate, self-willed, intractable; others to be timid and weak, ashamed of the truth, afraid to do right and yielding against conscience. Let each watch his own temper, inclinations, and desires; and never call that natural which is not reasonable; nor think any corrupt tendency too strong to be subdued by grace.

Observe, lastly, that the very best affections of the heart, though not selfish, may be irreligious; and though never to be renounced, are always to be governed and controlled. What affection so pure as the love of a parent for his child—yet if this feeling lead the parent to spoil his child by fond indulgence while it lives, or to murmur against God if it be taken away, even this affection becomes sinful.

The faithful Christian ‘puts on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness:’ therefore he watches his best affections, restrains his natural appetites, improves his temper, rules his spirits, narrowly observes his own peculiar bent and constitution, and mortifies or destroys his corrupt desires and sinful inclinations. See *Eph.* iv. 22, &c.
1 Pet. ii.

2. But we live in THE WORLD;—and we ought to live in it, and do our duty in it, notwithstanding its temptations. For we renounce not the world itself, but its vanities, and pomps, and wickedness, with all covetous desires too of its vain pomp and glory. If we quitted the world, and deserted our duties in it, vain regrets and covetous desires might still remain with us. But we are not even to renounce wealth, or rank, or honors, if our lot be cast among them: but, if we have these things, we must renounce all excessive love of them; and all eager desires of them, if we have them not. We must learn so to ‘use this world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.’ *1 Cor.* vii. 31.

‘We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.’ *1 John* v. 19. Here St. John speaks of a Heathen world, not of a Christian world: but many, who are called Christians, openly disobey their LORD; and many more are only half

obedient; and all Christians are weak, and liable to errors, both of the head and the heart. Therefore our duty is plain. We 'must not follow a multitude to do evil,' (*Exod.* xxiii. 2;) we must avoid the wicked, and keep ourselves 'unspotted from the world,' (*James* i. 27;) we must beware of the weak and vain, and 'not be conformed to this world,' (*Rom.* xii. 2;) we must not *blindly* follow even the good, because we have the holy Scriptures for our guide, and **CHRIST** for our perfect example.

The great objects of the true Christian are, to please God, to do good to men, and to reach heaven; and he will consider these objects in ordering his time, his expenses, his cares, his business, his amusements, his dress. For with these views, nothing is too inconsiderable for our regard: not our dress, lest it be vain, or immodest, or above our station; not our least expenses, lest our alms be checked, or ill-bestowed; not our amusements, lest they should offend a weak brother, or dissipate our own minds, or endanger the souls of others. And, in all cases, the world's standard must not be our rule of right, nor the world's praise our support. See *James* iv. 4. *John* xii. 42, 43.

Remember, also, that the best things in this world may be abused. Honest industry is most praiseworthy, but it is not our only duty; many pleasures are innocent, but a life of pleasure is unchristian; some cares are necessary, but excess of care is want of faith. And the best things in this world, whether we have them, or want them, may be over-valued. 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' *1 John* ii. 15-17. 'If ye be risen with **CHRIST**, seek those things which are above, where **CHRIST** sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.' *Col.* iii. 1, 2.

3. 'Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, **THE DEVIL**, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.' *1 Pet.* v. 8. He is in an especial manner *the tempter*, and *the enemy*. *Why* he is thus permitted to tempt us, we cannot tell: but God has many ways, that we know not of, whereby to draw good out of evil. Even *how* Satan tempts us, we scarcely know: we may never be able to distinguish his assaults from those of the world or the flesh. It is enough that we are set upon our guard, and mercifully taught how to oppose and to overcome the enemy. We may adopt the words of the Prophet: 'Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with him.' *2 Kings* vi. 16. By watchfulness and prayer we shall certainly prevail: 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' *James* iv. 7. *1 John* ii. 13, 14; v. 18.

Observe, that our adversary is an *evil spirit*; he will not appear to frighten us; his attacks are much more successful, because they are *unseen*. Suspect that he is at hand whenever such whispers as these are tempting you; as, 'That if we sin

now, we may repent by and by—or that this sin is not so very bad—or that another sin is very natural—or that it is very excusable to be sensual in youth, ambitious in manhood, covetous in old age—or that we are nobody's enemies but our own—or that after all we shall not be worse than our neighbors—or that we must take care not to be righteous overmuch.'

Some sins are more particularly ascribed in Scripture to the devil, as murder, pride, lying; (*John* viii. 44; *1 Tim.* iii. 6;) and we imitate him and his ways by malice, hatred, fraud, hypocrisy, envy, slander. But all sins are his works. We copy him most exactly whenever we tempt others to sin; but, whenever we sin ourselves, we do his work and give him pleasure, and defeat the gracious purposes of God. 'He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' *1 John* iii. 8.

When there are so many ways of sinning, by thought, by word, and by deed—so many enemies to be opposed, evil desires, evil men, and evil spirits—so many dangerous deceits, from the devil, the world, and the flesh,—the Christian has abundant need of continual watchfulness and fervent prayer.

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee the only GOD; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

III. *On our Engagement to Believe the Gospel.*

1. FAITH is *belief*. But religious faith is not mere belief in any thing, but such a belief and trust in GOD, his word, and his promises, as may tend to influence both our hearts and lives. Without *some* faith in GOD we are of no religion: without faith in *some* of those doctrines which distinguish the Gospel of CHRIST from every other religion, we are not of the Christian religion, nor in the way of salvation. 'Without faith,' says St. Paul, 'it is impossible to please GOD: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' *Heb.* xi. 6. But our LORD says, 'Ye believe in GOD, believe also in me.' *John* xiv. 1. His last command to his disciples was, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. As his forerunner, John Baptist, had declared long before, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of GOD abideth on him.' *John* iii. 36.

All the articles of the Christian faith ought to be believed, because GOD has revealed them to us in his *word*, that is, in the holy Scriptures. For why did he reveal them, but that we might receive them? But they cannot *all* be received except by *degrees*; because the Scriptures are a large work, and are

filled (especially those of the New Testament) with the doctrines of our faith. Some of them, and the most important of them, may be believed very early. Such are those articles of faith contained in the APOSTLES' CREED. And of all these articles of faith the person who is baptized, or who is confirmed, declares,
ALL THIS I STEADFASTLY BELIEVE.

2. Observe, then, the three great portions into which *the Creed* is divided. The first part declares our belief 'in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.'

The second, our belief 'in JESUS CHRIST his only Son our Lord;' it states the history of our LORD's *humiliation*, his conception and birth, his sufferings, crucifixion, and death, his burial, and descent into the place of departed spirits: and then again of his *exaltation*, his resurrection, ascension, his sitting on the right hand of the Father, until he come again in glory to judge both the dead and the living.

The third part expresses our belief 'in the HOLY GHOST'; through whose grace the universal Church of CHRIST is made holy, and all the saints, that is, all Christians who are sanctified by the HOLY GHOST, are joined in one communion or fellowship; and to these alone it is promised that their sins will be forgiven, and when they rise again with their bodies they shall inherit life everlasting.

These three portions of the Creed are so separated in our Prayer-books that even the eye may distinguish them. But they are more particularly distinguished in the Church Catechism, as expressing the three *chief* articles of our belief; for we believe in God, as 'the FATHER, who *hath made* us, and all the world,'—'the SON, who *hath redeemed* us, and all mankind,'—'the HOLY GHOST, who *sanctifieth* us, and all the elect people of God.' And we find this distinction in the very form of baptism. For, by our LORD's express command, we were baptized 'in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.' *Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.*

3. The Catechism, the Creed, even the form in Baptism, may *remind* us of all the main articles of Christian faith; but they do not *express* them all. We believe further that God is eternal, that is, without beginning and without end, a spirit present every where, all-powerful, infinitely wise, and good, and just, and holy, and merciful, and faithful.

We believe that THE FATHER not only *made* or created us and all things both visible and invisible, but that he preserves, sustains, and upholds all things; watches over, and governs us; knows, observes, and regards all our actions, and words, and thoughts, and wants, and desires.

We believe that THE SON came down upon earth, took our nature upon him, and became the CHRIST, who is both God and man, in order to our *redemption*; that is, in order to restore us to the favor of God, which we and all mankind had lost by sin, to procure our pardon, and to reconcile us to God, when through

sin or sinful inclinations we were his enemies ; to give us the grace of his HOLY SPIRIT, whereby we might first be born again to a new life of righteousness, and next might be enabled to continue in righteousness and in the favor of God ; to intercede for us with his Father, making our prayers acceptable to him, and procuring the pardon of those sins which through our frailty we still commit ; and, lastly, to procure for his faithful people the best and most astonishing gift of God, an eternal life of happiness and glory in heaven. Hence we believe in Him as our *Saviour*, or *Redeemer*, our *Advocate* with the Father, the *Mediator* between God and man, the *Prophet* who teaches us, the *Priest* who makes atonement for our souls, the *King* whom we obey.

We believe also in THE HOLY GHOST, who once inspired the holy Scriptures for our use, and who now *sanctifies*, or makes holy—not all mankind, but—‘all the people of God,’ that is, all Christians, who do not despise their Christian privileges, their new birth, namely, of water and of the Spirit, their adoption, their title to spiritual aid, but who are willing and desirous to be true and faithful to CHRIST, who love and obey their LORD, who seek his grace, use the means of grace, bring forth the fruits of grace. With these, and in these, God dwells by his Holy Spirit, aiding, strengthening, enlightening, purifying them ; all these are members of CHRIST’s holy universal Church ; they are united by one Spirit into one body, of which CHRIST is the head ; and, if they do not forsake this communion or fellowship of the saints, they will receive forgiveness of sins, be acquitted before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, and be received through his merits into everlasting glory.

4. This is a short summary of our faith. The Bible is its warrant ; and will lead us on, if properly studied, under grace, to the perfection of faith.

Consider these few texts, which may remind you of the principal points of Christian faith.

‘Thou, O LORD, hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ *Rev.* iv. 11. ‘Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth ?’ *Ps.* cxiii. 5, 6. ‘By thee have I been holden up from the womb.’ *Ps.* lxxi. 6. ‘Thou art about my path and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways.’ *Ps.* cxxxix. 2. ‘God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’ *Eccl.* xii. 14.

‘God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ *John* iii. 16. ‘All we like sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way ; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ *Is.* liii. 6. ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ *Ps.* li. 5. ‘All have sinned, and come short of

the glory of God.' *Rom.* iii. 23. 'God was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin : that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' *2 Cor.* v. 19, 21. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' *1 John* ii. 1, 2. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' *Heb.* vii. 25. 'The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.' *Rom.* vi. 23.

'Without holiness no man shall see the LORD.' *Heb.* xii. 14. 'Let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST depart from iniquity.' *2 Tim.* ii. 19. 'Now if any man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.' *Rom.* viii. 9, 14. 'Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord JESUS, and by the Spirit of our God. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ?' *1 Cor.* vi. 11, 19. 'By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.' *1 Cor.* xii. 13. 'In the Lord ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.' *Eph.* ii. 21, 22. 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.' *Gal.* v. 25. 'The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' *Eph.* v. 9. 'We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' *Gal.* v. 5.

These texts may remind us of the truth. But every *Lord's day*, the first day of the creation, and the first of our redemption, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, and the HOLY GHOST descended on the apostles, may remind us of God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Christian *Baptism*, whenever we see it administered, may by words remind us of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, and by its expressive sign may remind us of remission of sins and spiritual regeneration. And the *Lord's supper*, whenever we worthily partake of it, will not only remind us of, but enable us spiritually to receive, CHRIST's body which was given for us, and his blood of the new covenant which was shed for the remission of our sins, to the intent that we might evermore dwell in him and he in us.

If we hold this faith, we shall pray that we may continue in it; if we look for the highest of all benefits, we shall pray that we may never lose them.

O ALMIGHTY God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST himself being the chief corner-stone, grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto thee, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy

servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

'The grace of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and the love of God, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with us all. Amen.' *2 Cor. xiii. 14.*

IV. *Of our Engagement to Keep God's Holy Will.*

WILT THOU THEN OBEDIENTLY KEEP GOD'S HOLY WILL AND COMMANDMENTS, AND WALK IN THE SAME ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE?

I WILL ENDEAVOR SO TO DO, GOD BEING MY HELPER.

1. In these terms such as are of riper years make their third baptismal promise. And at our confirmation we ratify our promise accordingly; engaging to use our best *endeavors*, under the grace of God, to keep his holy will. If we feel that we hate sin, and desire to avoid it, we may safely say, *I renounce sin*: if we believe the articles of the Apostles' Creed, we may safely declare, *All this I steadfastly believe*: but we could not safely promise more than our best *endeavors* to keep all God's commandments. But remember, that this promise certainly means that we will make such *endeavors now*, without delay,—*honestly*, without reserve,—*humbly*, seeking God's help,—but *heartily*, doing all we can,—and *constantly*, to the very end of our lives.

2. That we may obey God's commandments, we must know both what they are and how to apply them. The *Ten Commandments* declare *some* of our duties, but by no means all of them. The Ten Commandments were originally addressed not to Christians under the Gospel, but to the Israelites under the Law; and contain some things which properly belong to the people of Israel and the law of Moses. This is the case with the threat in the second Commandment, and with the promise in the fifth. The land alluded to in the fifth Commandment is the land of Canaan, which God has never given to Christians; and Christians have no promise of long life in *this* world, for they have 'a better covenant, established upon better promises.' *Heb. viii. 6.* Even the fourth Commandment Christians do not observe according to the letter; for we hallow the *Lord's day*, the first day of the week, instead of the seventh, and do not regard any day literally as a *Sabbath* or day of entire rest. But, again, the Ten Commandments did not even declare all the moral duties of the Jews, who had other precepts both in the Law and in the Prophets; much less all the duties of Christians, who have new relations both to God as their Redeemer and Sanctifier, and to men, whether all men as redeemed, or the elect as members of one spiritual body.

That holy will of God, which *Christians* should obey, is chiefly taught in the *New Testament*. It is always taught by

the perfect example of JESUS CHRIST, and generally taught by the conduct of his apostles. It is more expressly declared in the parables and discourses of our LORD, and in the letters and speeches of his inspired apostles. You may turn sometimes to the following chapters, for particular rules of Christian obedience:—*Matt.* v. vi. vii. xv. xviii. xxv.; *Luke* vi. ix. x. xi. xii. xiv.; *John* iii. xiii. xv. xvii.; *Rom.* xii. xiii. xiv.; *1 Cor.* xi. xiii.; *Gal.* v. vi.; *Eph.* iv. v. vi.; *Phil.* ii. iii. iv.; *Col.* iii. iv.; *1 Thes.* iv. v.; *2 Thes.* iii.; *Heb.* xii. xiii.; *James*; *1 Peter* ii. iii. iv. v.; *2 Peter* i.; *1 John*. But the spirit of the New Testament will not be learned from a few separate chapters. The whole volume is filled with the rules of our duty. And it is best to read them as their inspired authors wrote them; the *precepts* being intimately connected with the *doctrines*, Christian obedience built up on Christian faith.

3. Yet, observe again, in *no book*, not in the Old Testament, not in the New, not in all the holy Scriptures, are *all* the rules of Christian obedience contained. The *principles* we have, but we have not all the *rules*. ‘Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.’ And, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ These two principles will comprehend all the Commandments. *Matt.* xxii. 37–40; *Rom.* xiii. 9; *Gal.* v. 14. But express rules fitted to all circumstances no volume could contain. Consider, therefore, not the words of the Commandments, but their full force and bearing; not the *letter* only of the law, but its *spirit*.

For example, the letter of the sixth Commandment forbids murder, and the letter of the seventh forbids adultery; but our LORD and his apostles teach us, that the spirit of the one condemns hatred and anger; and the spirit of the other condemns the secret lusts and sinful thoughts of the heart. (See *Matt.* v. 21, 27, 28; *1 John* iii. 15.) So must the spirit of every other Commandment be our guide. Thus the eighth forbids not stealing only, but every kind of fraud, or unjust dealing, or dishonest gain, or oppression, or withholding the wages or the dues of another. So the fifth commands the payment of their due honors, not to parents only, but to all our superiors, spiritual and temporal; ‘fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor.’ *Rom.* xiii. 7. And it may remind us, upon similar principles, of our duties to every other relative, or kinsman, or friend.

And do not say that we know not how to find out the spirit of the rules, or how to apply them to our own circumstances. He seeks to evade the law who asks, *Who is my neighbor?* (See *Luke* x. 29, &c.) We may never, like the good Samaritan, find a wounded man by the way-side, and yet we are taught to *go and do likewise*. For we are not treated as children; appeal is made to our own feelings, and our own understandings: we do not think of obeying the *letter* of the law when it says, ‘Him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not

to take thy coat also ; *Luke vi. 29* ; and to find out the spirit of every other law, we are equally able if equally willing.

And for this we have many other helps and guides beside the Bible. Thus the Catechism explains many parts of your duty to God and to your neighbor. The Prayer-book may direct your minds to several more. Many of you have other religious books to unfold the particulars of your duty, and pious friends to assist you in applying them. All of you have sermons to hear, and ministers to consult. And, above all, God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, to enlighten our understandings, correct our feelings, and direct our ways.

4. And let us not deceive ourselves ; Christian faith means nothing without Christian obedience ; our hopes are vain, if our lives are impure ; we do not love God, if we do not keep his commandments ; we have not the Spirit, if we bring forth no fruits ; holiness is the very calling of the Christian. Why are the Scriptures so express on these points, but because they are of the very last importance ?

'CHRIST gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' *Tit. ii. 14*. 'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' *James ii. 26*. 'We are created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' *Eph. ii. 10*. 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' *1 Pet. i. 15*. 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD.' *Heb. xii. 14*. 'Every man that hath this hope in him, (of seeing CHRIST hereafter,) purifieth himself even as he is pure.' *1 John iii. 2, 3*. 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as he walked.' *1 John ii. 6*. 'Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.' *Eph. v. 8, 9*. 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' *John xiv. 21*.

O ALMIGHTY LORD, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments ; that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity ; and that we may obtain that which thou dost promise, make us to love that which thou dost command, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

V. On the Means of Grace.

Good resolutions will not make good men. No, nor will our best endeavors be successful, without the help of God. 'Abide in me,' says our LORD, 'and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye,

except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.' *John xv. 4, 5.* 'If any man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his—as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD.' *Rom. viii. 9, 14.*

To understand the operations of the HOLY SPIRIT upon the hearts of Christians may be difficult; to distinguish his influences from the workings of our own minds may be often impossible, and can never be necessary; but this practical rule is easy to be understood and to be observed,—'Be as diligent and active as if you could do every thing for yourselves; and as humble as if you could do nothing.' And this is also the scriptural rule; 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' *Phil. ii. 12, 13.*

Grace is favor. There is no higher favor for Christians upon earth than to have the aid and comfort of God himself dwelling in them by his Spirit. *1 Cor. vi. 19.* Hence this favor is especially called *grace*, or the *grace of the HOLY SPIRIT*; prayers for this aid are called *prayers for grace*; and the means by which we may obtain it are called *MEANS OF GRACE*. We have no claim to favor, if we will not use the means with which God has blessed us. 'Our heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' *Luke xi. 13.* Why should He give his Spirit to those who *can*, but who *will not* ask him?

The means of grace comprehend all religious exercises, and religious rites and ordinances, appointed, recommended, or sanctioned, under the Gospel. Let those which follow be considered particularly.

1. PRAYER is of all the means of grace the most in our own power. It is in the power of every Christian from almost the first day on which he receives his understanding to the very last moment that he retains it. *Private prayer* is in his power, whether he is, or is not, allowed the benefit of family prayer, or when he is prevented from joining in public worship. He can pray even abroad, or at his work, or in sickness, or on his bed, although he cannot read; even if he cannot speak; for we may breathe a prayer, or think a prayer, as well as utter it. *1 Sam. i. 13.* And we should pray very frequently and with great perseverance, and in all seasons and circumstances. (See *Matt. vi. 6; xiv. 23. Luke xviii. 1-7; xxii. 44. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Thes. v. 17. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 8. James v. 13, 16. 1 Pet. iv. 7.*) Yet it is good to have some stated prayers, and stated times of prayer: in the morning and in the evening, at the very least. (See *Ps. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.*) But remember,—repeating words is not praying; to do us good, or not to do us harm, our prayers must be offered up with reverence without formality, with attentive minds, devoutly

numbly, sincerely, earnestly, with faith, and in the name of CHRIST. The Apostles' Creed is not a prayer: the common practice of rehearsing it every day may be useful, but may very easily become a formal practice. When the Lord's prayer is used by itself, we should in our hearts offer it up to the Father through the mediation of the Son: our LORD had taught this prayer to his disciples, before he instructed them to pray in his name. (See *John* xvi. 23, 24.) And in this case we should make it more especially a prayer for grace, by understanding 'our daily bread' to mean 'all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies.' But it is better to add to our morning and evening devotions some other prayer for the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT.* We should indeed, *bless* and *praise* God fervently for every one of the blessings we enjoy, temporal as well as spiritual. But a Christian has very little reason to be anxious or particular in his *prayers* for his body, or his substance, or for any *temporal* blessings: he should seldom pray for any thing of this kind beside food, raiment, and protection, and never for any thing without the condition expressed or understood, 'if it be Thy gracious will.' But he has the strongest reason to pray fervently and distinctly for *spiritual* blessings and graces, for the welfare of his own soul and those of others, both here and hereafter. (See *Matt.* v. 6; vi. 33. *1 Tim.* vi. 8-11.)

2. The WORSHIP of God in all its parts, not only prayer, but confession of sins, profession of faith, thanksgiving, blessing, praising, and adoring God, is among our best means of grace. That we are allowed to join in PUBLIC WORSHIP openly and securely, not like the first Christians in vaults and eaves, in secrecy and danger, is among our highest blessings. Let no trifling excuses, the weather, the roads, the distance of the church, the want of better clothes, much less the ordinary business of our callings, be made for absenting ourselves from public worship on the Lord's day at least. But do we really value this blessing ourselves, if we are not anxious to secure it for others also, and especially for our children and household? Our servants have as much interest in the public service of the Church as we have; and the master or mistress of a family should even from time to time debar themselves from this advantage, rather than that any member of their family should be week after week deprived of it. Expedients are easily found where the heart is in the cause.

The SERMON, be it remembered, is a useful *addition* to public worship, but not a principal part of it. And, if we have not always in our churches the teaching of God's minister, we have the teaching of God's own word: the *Scriptures* are always

* On this account two short prayers, taken from the Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, are printed in the last page; and either of them will be excellent for the purpose.

read in our public services. These points should be considered both by those who wander from church to church, and by those who flock to the sermon, and neglect the prayers. ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’—our LORD was speaking of Christians uniting in *prayer* together. *Matt. xviii. 19, 20.*

Why FAMILY WORSHIP should be so often neglected by Christians is hard to say. ‘Some members of your family will attend it without profit, or with irreverence, or with sinful desires unchecked or indulged ; or will make it a substitute for private prayer.’ It may be so ; all the means of grace may be perverted or abused : but they *are* means of grace notwithstanding ; and much more frequently God will bless them. Can you tell that the blessing of CHRIST just alluded to will not be on *two or three* members of one family *gathered together in his name*? But you ‘have no time for family worship.’ Yet most of you can assemble together, and more than once in the day, for your meals. Can you never assemble to pray together, all or most of the family, once in the day?—not in the morning?—not in the evening?—not even on the Lord’s day?*

3. Why has God given us the *holy Scriptures*? Common sense replies, that we might study them : and it assures us that the HOLY SPIRIT, who inspired the Scriptures, will bless the devout, humble, and diligent STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES. Will he bless any thing short of this? Is it showing sufficient respect for the Bible, to bind it handsomely, and keep it carefully in our drawers and closets, and lay it upon the table on Sundays? Those who cannot read sometimes attain a surprising knowledge of the Scriptures even by what they hear ; those who have the blessing of being able to read may attain considerably more : yet not without diligence, not without prayer, and not without meekness. Pride and conceit will ruin all. (See *2 Tim. iii. 15-17. James i. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.*) One of the very chief uses of *sermons* is to explain the Scriptures. If difficulties still remain, imitate the blessed Virgin ; lay them up in the heart, and be patient ; hereafter perhaps they may be resolved. (See *Luke ii. 18, 19, 50, 51.*) But sermons are almost useless to those who know nothing of the Scriptures, scarcely distinguishing the Old Testament from the New, or the promises under the Law from those under the Gospel.

In *family instruction* it is well that the Scriptures should be both read and explained. But if no explanation can be given, to know the words of Scripture is something ; and by degrees instruction, private or public, under grace, will unfold their meaning.

* There are very many excellent books of *prayers for families*, which may easily be obtained and at a trifling expense. Bishop Blonfield’s Manual (published by the Protestant Episcopal Press) is a very good and a very cheap one. However, let the advantage of family worship in any form never tempt any one to neglect the habit of *private* prayer.

4. The LORD'S DAY is for temporal uses the poor man's especial blessing ; for religious uses an invaluable blessing both to rich and poor. This day affords time to all for the use of almost all other means of grace, prayer, and worship, hearing and reading the Scriptures, hearing or reading sermons or other religious works, meditation, self-examination, and, frequently, partaking of the Lord's supper. Let not the blessing be thrown away. Those who are most devout on every other day will ever stand in need of this. Let the day be observed religiously ; let not the shop be closed only, but no business done in it ; let the account-book be unopened ; our ordinary labors, whether of the hand or of the head, suspended ; and household cares and service abridged. Let not this occasion serve the purposes of idleness, vanity, or dissipation ; for displaying dress, indulging pleasures, or pursuing journeys. Hinder not the good of others, if you cannot promote it. But rather employ the day according to its design, for the good of your own and others' souls, and for the glory of God.

5. The Scriptures rank FASTING among our means of grace : but only as an *occasional* duty. (See *Matt.* vi. 16-18 ; ix. 14, 15. *Acts* xiii. 3. *1 Cor.* vii. 5.) Its use is to assist in bringing the body under subjection, in acquiring habits of self-command, weakening the power of the world over our minds, and disposing our hearts to devotion. To abstain from other gratifications beside those of food, will often promote some of these ends. The correct practice, however, cannot now be explained ; although the subject deserved to be noticed.

Yet observe,—fasting is not holiness, but one of the means of attaining holiness. Its due observance requires much caution and discretion. Let it never be allowed to impair our *health*, otherwise it will impair our usefulness,—nor to sour our *temper*, for we shall not love God more by loving man less. It is not *in itself* pleasing to God, who takes no pleasure in his servants' pain,—nor *by itself* alone useful to us, for the Scriptures do not separate fasting from *prayer*.

6. SELF-EXAMINATION is *always* necessary. Without it our prayers may be hindered, the Scriptures become unprofitable, the sacraments dangerous. Shall the merchant watch his affairs with all exactness, and the Christian never take account either of his sins that he may avoid them, or of his virtues that he may improve them ? Before the Lord's supper, especially, examine whether you feel *repentance*, and desire *amendment* ; whether you *know* the benefits of CHRIST's sacrifice, and *believe* in them, and are *grateful* for them ; and are therefore in *love and charity* with all men. A week's preparation is not necessary for this ;

few hours, if longer space is not allowed him, may suffice to he well-instructed and sincere Christian. Even a few moments' thought may inform the considerate Christian, who really knows his own heart, whether he has advanced, or gone back, in the conquest of his *besetting sin*. And those who have carefully

trained themselves in the *habit* of *daily* self-examination may almost in a few moments review the *words*, and *actions*, and *thoughts* of the day that is past.

To assist you in longer exercises of this kind, and you will frequently need them, many of you have forms of self-examination in the several works on the Lord's supper, such as Bishop Hobart's Companion to the Altar, or in the New Manual of Devotion. If any of you have no assistance of this kind, watch your hearts and ways so much the more diligently: examine yourselves, as to your faith, by the *Creed*; as to your duties, by the *Ten Commandments*, considered not only as to the letter but the spirit: (see above, chapter iv. 2, 3:) take account of your duty both to God and to your *neighbor*, as explained in the *Catechism*: whenever you read or hear the Scriptures, or a sermon, or the Church services, the Litany in particular, observe, as to every *doctrine* whether you believe it, as to every *sin* whether you avoid, every *duty* whether you practise, it: try yourself by the *prayers* you use every day; as thus, 'Do I hallow the name of God?'—'Do I endeavor to advance the kingdom of CHRIST in myself and others?'—'Do I desire and endeavor that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven?'—'Do I labor industriously for my daily bread?'—'Do I bless God for my daily support?'—'Do I seek the more important spiritual food of my soul?'—'Do I forgive those who offend against me?'—'Do I avoid temptation?'—Consider to whom you are *related* by blood, or any other tie, as to your parents, or brethren, or ruler, or minister, or friend,—we commonly know what our duties are, if we reflect to whom we owe them; and it requires much less learning than honesty to perceive whether we are really advancing in the Christian course of righteousness and holiness, of piety, purity, and charity.

7. The Christian SACRAMENTS are more than *means* of grace, they are *pledges* of it; not only *signs*, but *earnests* and *assuring signs* of God's favor.

To BAPTISM you have been already admitted. Hence your admission into the Christian Church, your reconciliation to God, and your claim to the Christian privileges. If you have children, give them a similar claim to the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT as early as you can; nobody can say how early they may require it; and they have no title to his grace without Christian baptism. But seek for their sponsors those who are Christians in earnest: not to advance their worldly fortunes, but to improve their prospect of future glory. And for this alone your children will thank you a few years hence.

To the LORD'S SUPPER you are now admissible. You will undoubtedly seek admission to it very early, and continue to attend it very frequently, if you honestly consult your own good sense, and value your own soul, and regard and love your Saviour. You have the advantage, probably, of some better book than this to teach you fully the nature and benefits of this

sacrament, the danger and sinfulness of neglecting it, and the proper way of preparing yourselves to receive it worthily. If not, read and consider 'The Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper' in your Prayer-book, and some of those parts of the New Testament which particularly relate to this sacrament; as, *Matt. xxvi.*; *Mark xiv.*; *Luke xxii.*; and *1 Cor. x. 16, 17; xi. 20-34*; and then ask your own hearts whether the *second exhortation* before the communion service invites you to the table of the LORD too earnestly. But you are '*too young* to attend it,'—if indeed you are too young, your minister will advise delay; consult him frankly upon the question; for the Church supposes that you are not; and God warns you every day that you are not too young to die. But you are '*not yet fit to communicate*,'—then neither are you fit to die; and this is awful. But '*you wait till you become more worthy*,'—to wait till you are perfectly worthy in every respect is to wait for ever; less and less unworthy you may be enabled to become by often partaking of the Lord's supper; and sincere preparation will always through grace make you sufficiently worthy in one respect,—that is, sufficiently worthy to partake of this sacrament. Still '*you dread the danger*,'—but is there no danger in disobeying CHRIST's command? But '*you will probably return to the sins of which you had repented*,'—too probably you will; but the proper question is, Do you sincerely desire to avoid them if so, this sacrament will lessen the chance of your returning to them. Or perhaps, '*you have the cares of a family*,'—why this is, if possible, a stronger reason for using with all diligence this and all other means of grace. The proper preparation is neither difficult nor long. And here are the very means to save you from the danger of your cares, and to bring a blessing on yourself and your family. Have you still other excuses? Consider honestly whether they '*will avail before God*,' or whether you can even plead them before him, if you have not enough to remove them by prayer, and by consulting his word, his Church, and his ministers. Surely your Saviour did not contrive a snare for your souls when just about to die for them; but knew well your wants, and consulted for your good. Can we really believe in this Saviour, or reasonably expect his favor, while we refuse to declare our faith in him, or love toward him, in the very rite which he desired us to celebrate in remembrance of him?

A few words more upon the means of grace in general. When we have used any one of them, as prayer, or worship, or the study of the Scriptures, let us not be so utterly mistaken as to suppose we have *conferred* a favor upon God, instead of *receiving* one from him. Neither let us take credit to ourselves for the performance of a duty, as if this duty were not to lead to others. These acts are *means*, and their end is our *improvement*. Neither let us regard them as *tasks*. If we feel them irksome, our remaining *corruption* causes the feeling.

But you do not, perhaps, as yet reap from them either the *improvement* or the *satisfaction* which you might desire. Be patient, and persevere. Use them neither seldom, nor formally, but continually, devoutly, earnestly: and by degrees, yet only by degrees, so using them, and striving also to *live and act* as under grace, you will receive grace, and be improved in heart and life. If indeed the use of the means of grace is not followed up by earnest *endeavors* on our parts to amend and improve ourselves, God will withhold or withdraw his grace. His general rule is to grant us aid according to our use of it. (See *Matt. xxv. 29. Luke viii. 18. John xv. 2.*)

By degrees also satisfaction and delight will attend our devout use of the means of grace. Such of them indeed as relate chiefly to our *sins*, or our *corruption*, as fasting, self-examination, confession of sins, can afford satisfaction only by comparison; according to our progress in subduing sin, and acquiring holiness. But for the rest, they are our *blessings* and *privileges*, as believers in **CHRIST**, and members of his Church. With our lips we have already thanked God for them repeatedly. In the *General Thanksgiving* we have blessed God, not only for our creation, preservation, and every blessing of this life, but, above all, for his inestimable love in our redemption by **CHRIST**, *for the means of grace*, and for the hope of glory. That God should accept our services at all is an infinite condescension; and we might thankfully tread in any path which would lead to future glory. But He has provided even for our satisfaction in the use of the means of grace. Persevere, and you will become ‘glad when they say unto you, Let us go into the house of the **LORD**.’ *Ps. cxxii. 1.* Prayer and the Scriptures will not only become our refuge in distress, but our delight in prosperity. We shall joyfully as well as thankfully use the privileges of Christians, receive the benefits of the Christian ministry, and join in communion with the Church, and with **CHRIST** its Head.

Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises, through the merits of JESUS **CHRIST** our Lord. Amen..

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son **CHRIST** our Lord; grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love thee, through JESUS **CHRIST** our Lord. Amen.

VI. *On the Motives to Christian Obedience.*

Good actions have no value, unless founded on good principles. We set little store by the attentions of those, who, professing to serve us, are bent only on serving themselves. Nor

will our heavenly Father accept our services if they have not some regard to Him.

Not that we either need, or can, disregard ourselves. God himself has united our interest and duty. He has made us to desire happiness; and he holds forth to us abundant rewards. To seek rewards or happiness from him is to regard him. In many cases also he blesses us with the favor and praise of men. But if this praise be our object, we have our reward, and have nothing further to expect. (See *Matt.* vi. 1-6.) To be sober, or honest, or kind, or to frequent the Church, with a view to man's esteem, or without a view to the favor of God, even when it is not hypocrisy, is not Christianity.

But of the principles which are religious, some are higher than others. The following hints may be useful under this head.

1. 'The FEAR OF THE LORD is the beginning of wisdom.' *Ps.* cxi. 10. And those who have the Christian promises are still required to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God.' (2 *Cor.* vii. 1. *Luke* xii. 5.) Yet it will be our own fault if we cannot unite the love, with the fear, of God: for the curse of the law is taken away, and we are placed under a covenant of grace. (See *Rom.* v.; *Gal.* iii.; *Eph.* ii.) Terrible indeed is the portion of those who wilfully reject this covenant. (*Heb.* x. 28-31. 2 *Pet.* ii. 1.) And they, who, professing to live under it, hold the truth in unrighteousness, deceive themselves to their own destruction. On this great point 'let no man deceive you with vain words.' *Eph.* v. 1-6. The best Christians also will have cause to 'work out their salvation with fear and trembling,' *Phil.* ii. 12; looking, namely, to *themselves* and their own frailty, (2 *Pet.* iii. 17. *Heb.* xii. 15. 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. 2 *Cor.* vi. 1,) but looking to God they have confidence and peace; (1 *Cor.* xv. 58. *Rom.* v. 1, 2, 8-10; viii. 1, 15-17, 32;) and the only fear of him they entertain is that *godly fear* which is pious awe and humble reverence for his holy name. (*Heb.* xii. 28. *Acts* ix. 31.)

2. But the sincere Christian is permitted, and is not ashamed, to be moved by THE HOPE OF REWARD. (*Matt.* v. 12. *Heb.* x. 35.) He believes that godliness hath promise even 'of the life that now is,' as well as 'of that which is to come.' 1 *Tim.* iv. 8. Yet, let it be observed, the rewards of this life are not under the Gospel what they were under the Law, health, and riches, and long life, or other worldly prosperity. Prudence indeed may purchase some of these things; but it is surely enough that godliness should procure us peace of mind, the comfort and joy of the HOLY GHOST should give us the hope of future glory, and lead the way to it. Here are the principles of entire obedience. 'He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as CHRIST is pure.' (1 *John* iii. 3. 2 *Pet.* iii. 11-14. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17, 18.) Yet the Christian knows that these *rewards* are in fact purchased for him *through the merits of CHRIST*. He never dreams that he can deserve heaven by the purest service. He still is, and confesses that he is, *an unprofitable servant* - he

constantly believes and acknowledges that eternal life is a *gift*, and salvation *not of debt but of grace*. (See *Luke xvii. 10. Rom. vi. 23 ; iv. 4. Eph. ii. 8, 9.*)

3. Not trust in the *promises* alone, but FAITH IN ALL THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL, supplies the purest motives to Christian obedience. Not only are we to imitate the spotless life of our Saviour, but we should make every thought of his death, or rising again, or ascension, a motive to obedience. For ‘we are buried with him by baptism into death : that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.’ *Rom. vi. 4, 6.* ‘If ye then be risen with CHRIST, seek those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth on the right hand of God.’ *Col. iii. 1.* Observe how the Church, in imitation of the Apostle, directs our thoughts from Christian truths to the fruits of holiness, in her Collects for Christmas-day, Easter-even, Ascension-day, Whitsunday. And is not holiness in fact the natural fruit of faith? For who really believes that the only-begotten Son of God gave himself a sacrifice for our sins, and yet does not desire to avoid sin? Or that our bodies are the temples of the HOLY GHOST, and yet does not desire to attain holiness? ‘What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.’ *1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.* ‘We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again.’ *2 Cor. v. 14, 15.* ‘Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.’ *Tit. ii. 13, 14.*

4. But of all motives to obedience, the highest and the best is GRATITUDE, OR THE LOVE OF GOD for his infinite mercies and loving-kindness to us. This love cannot be separated either from *charity* or from *obedience*. So St. John; ‘For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love Gon whom he hath not seen?’ (*1 John iv. 20. John xiii. 34.*) And again, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.’ (*1 John v. 3. John xiv. 21.*) For how indeed can we love God and not desire to please him? and how expect to please him but by doing his will? We shall by no means attain to the perfection of this motive at once. But we should seek to attain it more and more. ‘I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.’ *Rom. xii. 1.* ‘In this was manifested the love of

God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him because he first loved us. And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.' *1 John iv. 9, 10, 19, 21; v. 1, &c.*

O LORD, who never failest to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love; keep us, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we loving thee above all things may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

VII. *On the Extent of Obedience; or, Growth in Grace.*

I. THE most fatal of errors is the miserable delusion of those who call themselves Christians, and yet are *not in a state of grace, not in the way of salvation.* It is not presumption, it is only charity, to point out certain classes whom we dare not affirm to be in a state of grace.

1. The *profligate*, who avowedly live *a life of sin.* Their danger is extreme. It is only wonderful that they can deceive even themselves. They are warned again and again that they 'have no inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST or of God.' (See particularly *Eph. v. 1-6. Gal. v. 19-21. Col. iii. 5, 6. 1 Pet. iv. 18. 2 Pet. ii. 19-21. 1 John iii. 7.*)

2. The *idle*, who live only *a life of pleasure;* and the *busy*, who live only *a life of care.* Both classes equally allow no time to religion; and one and the same text points out the danger of both. 'The thorns choke the word.' (*Luke viii. 14; xxi. 34. Ja. v. 1-5.*)

3. The *proud*, who would be saved without the grace of CHRIST, or be holy without his Spirit: and the *corrupt*, who would exalt grace in order to discard holiness. The Scriptures often declare the danger of both classes in the same passages. (*Rom. x. 3, 4; v. 20, 21; vi. 1, 2, 23. Eph. ii. 8-10, 18-22. Gal. v. 5, 6, 22-25. Heb. x. 24. Ja. ii. 26.*)

4. *Wilful sinners*, whether committing *one known sin*, or omitting *one known duty*, obstinately and habitually, and without resistance. If the amount of disobedience appear small, the principle of disobedience is triumphant. Therefore, '*offending in one point they are guilty of all;*' and, '*Sin hath dominion over them.*' (*Ju. ii. 10. 1 John iii. 4-6. Rom. vi. 14.*)

5. The *careless and indifferent.* And these, perhaps, are agreeable and amiable, are beloved by men, and would be loved

by CHRIST, if they would only think of him and follow him. Their danger is the greater, because no one tells them of it. For when we are not ourselves offended, we too easily acquit those who offend God. But is it not a grievous offence and affront to God, to live without regarding him?—without any serious or grateful thought of the pardon, the favor, the grace of the Spirit here, the immense rewards hereafter, which CHRIST died to purchase for us?

II. All these persons are in a dangerous condition. We cannot presume to say that they are *in a state of grace*; that is, enjoying God's favor and assistance now, with a just hope, according to the Gospel, of his blessing hereafter. Though the HOLY SPIRIT desires to sanctify them, they care not, or wish not, or refuse, to be made holy. But into any one of these dangerous conditions we may fall. Many hear the word, and even with joy, yet bring no fruit to perfection. (*Matt. xiii. 3-9, 18-23.*) We may 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God.' *Eph. iv. 30.* 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.' *1 Cor. x. 12.* 'Beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.' *2 Pet. iii. 17.* 'Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.' *Eph. vi. 13.*

III. But what if we both are in a state of grace, and do not fall from our own steadfastness, is this all that we should consider? The Apostle adds, 'GROW IN GRACE AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.' *2 Pet. iii. 18.*

1. Now some well-meaning Christians never seem to think of this. Honest in their dealings, kind in their dispositions, correct in their conduct, regular in the performance of religious exercises, they seem to have nothing more to do. Not that they call themselves perfect, but they do not aim at perfection. They take a partial view of Christianity, or a low standard of holiness, comparing themselves with their neighbors and not with CHRIST.

And some, it is to be feared, persuade themselves that they are already perfected either by the perfect obedience of our Saviour, or by an extraordinary inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT; that they have enjoyed some *sensible* token of his presence, or have *felt* their interest in CHRIST; and are safe. They are far otherwise; they are in great danger. They have misunderstood the Scriptures, and deluded themselves. Let them as CHRIST'S peculiar people be *zealous of good works*; (*Tit. ii. 10-14;*) let them seek to bring forth the *fruit of the Spirit*. (*Gal. v. ;*) and they will find much more yet to be done.

In any case, if we rest upon our oars, there is a current that may carry us back. But our aim should be to go forward; considering what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness who look for the coming of the day of God; and what perfection they should desire who look

for that heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness ; and how zealous we should be to display our love toward God, whose love to us has been boundless. (2 Pet. iii. 11-14. 1 John iii. 1, &c.) Hence the Church has said, that 'our profession is to follow the example of our Saviour CHRIST, and to be made like unto him,—continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.' (Order of Baptism.) Hence she entreats God for those who are confirmed 'daily to increase in them his manifold gifts of grace.' And St. Paul had been above twenty years laboring and suffering in the cause of Christianity, and seeking to improve both himself and others, when he spoke thus of himself; 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of CHRIST JESUS. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in CHRIST JESUS.' Phil. iii. 8-14.

And we, surely, have as rich a prize to seek ; and we have souls to us as valuable; and CHRIST has offered himself for us as well as for St. Paul. We should, therefore, imitate the Apostle; and having learned 'how we ought to walk and to please God, so we should abound more and more.' (1 Thes. iv. 1; iii. 12, 13. 2 Cor. ix. 10. Phil. i. 9, &c. Eph. iv. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 2, &c. 2 Pet. i. 5-11.)

2. But you 'do not exactly perceive what more is to be done.' Examine more narrowly into the heart and the life. Much will be found to be done. It is not, indeed, the work of a day or a year to cleanse the heart or direct the life even according to the letter of the baptismal promises. Our besetting sin is not easily subdued; and perhaps when one sin is overcome, another renews the contest; or new circumstances may bring new duties; and our trial may be varied by sickness, loss of friends, adversity, or be increased by prosperity. But suppose our ordinary temptations to be resisted, and our ordinary duties discharged,—then these few hints may suggest something yet to be done.

First, Regarding chiefly *ourselves*—Are our *thoughts* engaged always innocently, and often usefully? Is the *tempter* really governed, and, whatever it was by nature, rendered Christian by grace? (See above, Chapter II. 1.) Can we govern the *tongue*, endeavoring never to provoke or offend others, always to speak of them and to them mildly and charitably, often to please and to improve them? Are our *appetites, passions, and affections* under Christian restraint and control? Are our *motives* more and more purified from worldly considerations, and exalted by the thoughts of heaven? Have we *contented minds*, and without *anxiety*? Are we *patient*, nay *cheerful*.

under disease, losses, poverty, injustice, ingratitude, under irksome labors, unseasonable interruptions, and the little daily ills of life? Are we *humble*, not only in addressing God, but in bearing contempt, affronts, or reproofs, from men? Do we become more and more deeply *sensible of the corruption of our nature?*

And, secondly, regarding our demeanor and affections *toward God*. Can we not improve in *reverence* toward his holy name? Can we not pray, and worship him, read, or meditate upon, his word, more *frequently*, and *earnestly*, and *attentively*, and *joyfully*? Can we not by degrees learn and understand more and more of the *ways and mercies* of God in his dispensations to fallen men? Do we put our *whole trust* in Him, and entirely *resign* ourselves to his disposal? Are we more anxious not to grieve *His HOLY SPIRIT*? Do we endeavor to live both *in His fear and to his glory*? Can we not grow in *thankfulness* and *love* toward Him, speaking perhaps more frequently, and certainly thinking more devoutly and more habitually, of his astonishing mercies to mankind, to his Church, and to ourselves?

But, thirdly, if we improve in these things, we shall certainly find more and more to be done *toward others*: we shall become more ready to *forbear*, and to *forgive*, more *mild*, less *censorious*, more anxious for the *temporal* and for the *spiritual welfare* of others, even of our *enemies*. Are we less ashamed of ‘*confessing CHRIST before men?*’ (*Matt. x. 32. Luke ix. 26.*) Do we anxiously seek not to *endanger* by our words, dress, amusements, or example, the souls of those ‘*for whom CHRIST died?*’ (*Rom. xiv. 15, &c. 1 Cor. viii. 11, &c.*) Do we endeavor so to order our time, expenses, and employments, that we may make full use of our talents to the *benefit* of others? Do we aim at fulfilling all the offices of *charity* and of *brotherly love*? (*1 Cor. xiii. Ja. i. 27. Matt. x. 42; xxv. 34-40. John xv. 12.*) Do we seek the *spiritual improvement*, more especially of our own *children, household, and friends?* Is our conduct designed to ‘*adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things?*’ (*Tit. ii. 10.*) Do we seek the *unity* of *CHRIST’s Church*? its *edification*? its *extension*? (*Eph. iv. 1-6, 29. Rom. xiv. 19. Matt. vi. 10.*) For if we cannot advance the kingdom of God by our active exertions, we may by our *patience* and our *prayers*; and if poverty, or age, or sickness, prevent our doing good to the *bodies* of men, scarcely any circumstances deprive the Christian of the still higher power of profiting their souls.

In a word, take account not only of your *sins*, but of your *virtues*; and then *self-government, devotion, and charity*, faithfully cultivated on Christian motives, and in imitation of *CHRIST*, will furnish ample room for *continual improvement*.

3. Yet do not imagine that any thing here suggested is too *difficult* to be attempted, or that the attempt will *impair happiness*.

This life, indeed, is designed in the first place for our *trial*,

and only in the second for our happiness. If the happiness of heaven cannot be sought except by the sacrifice of present comfort or enjoyment, nothing should be too dear to be so sacrificed. (*Matt. v. 29, 30; x. 37-39.*) Yet in general and upon the whole great sacrifices are not required of Christians ; and their chance of present happiness may even increase with their increasing hopes of future glory. Our pleasures may be changed indeed, but not therefore lessened. You suppose that the happiness of a man differs from that of a brute, but is far above it ; and the satisfactions of holiness differ from the pleasures of vice, but far exceed them. We have not indeed the promises of outward wealth and prosperity like the Israelites under the law ; but these do not always cause happiness. There may be sad hearts under soft clothing. The inward joys on the contrary which are promised to Christians are happiness itself, and may be felt under any outward circumstances. To be serious is not to be miserable ; it is only to be rational. And gloom and melancholy are no parts of Christianity ; while cheerfulness is our duty ; and joy is among the gifts of the Spirit.

To *attain* perfection is difficult ; but not so to *aim at it*. And it is the constant endeavor after Christian perfection which is required of us. And our earnest endeavors, under grace, will be rewarded by continual improvement. Yet if you are conscious that such endeavors are made constantly and sincerely, and with the continual use of all the means of grace, be not disheartened if improvement does not always seem to follow. With so much frailty there may be some backslidings. (See the Collect for the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.) And, beside, new difficulties may have grown out of new trials, whether of adversity or of prosperity ; and if the stream flows stronger against us, our efforts may not have been relaxed, although our progress is slower. *God is faithful*, and will in his own good time *make us a way to escape.* (*1 Cor. x. 13.*)

It may be also that he will sometimes try us by withdrawing, or seeming to withdraw, the aids or the comfort of His Holy Spirit. Our Saviour himself upon the cross adopted the words of David, ‘ My God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ’ *Ps. xxii. 1.* Yet he was not forsaken. He revived, he rose, he ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and there sitteth to watch over his faithful servants, to lead them safely through their manifold temptations, and guide them by his grace, if they will not disappoint his merciful endeavors, through a few short years of discipline to an eternal life of glory. ‘ May, then, the very God of peace sanctify us wholly ; and may our whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.’ *1 Thes. v. 23.*

Give us, O LORD, we beseech thee, true repentance ; forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances ; and endue us with the grace of thy HOLY SPIRIT to amend our lives according to thy holy word.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

Prayers for the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

See page 15.

O GOD, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy HOLY SPIRIT may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen.

ALMIGHTY GOD, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy HOLY SPIRIT, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name; through CHRIST our Lord. Amen.



No. 135

MORNING VISITS

TO

THE RECTOR'S STUDY;

OR

CONVERSATIONS ON CONFIRMATION.

BY REV. W. E. WYATT. D. D.

"BUT you have been a member of the church," said Henry to his friend, young Mr. Temple, "for several years. Why need you to be confirmed?"

"I have been a member of the church," Mr. Temple replied, "for twenty years, for I was baptized in my infancy. But having been absent from home at the periods of the Bishop's last two visits, I have availed myself of the provision of the church for such cases, and have been a communicant for two or three years."

Henry. "And do you imagine that confirmation is necessary for me, although I received adult baptism so recently."

Temple. If there were no other grounds for believing it, I should infer it from the fact, that at least a large portion of those whose confirmation is recorded in scripture, had received baptism at a mature age. Some of those confirmed by St. Paul in Syria and Silicia (*Acts xv. 41.*) may have had infant baptism.

Henry. This, I think, is one of the hours named by our minister for conversation with persons desiring to be informed on the subject. Let us go to him now.

Temp. Regarding him as the authorised dispenser in this section of CHRIST's church, of the truths and privileges of the gospel, I may say without irreverence, "To whom else shall we go." Let us seek, of the gospel ministry, in the uncorrupted word, and with the promised Comforter, "to be led into all truth."

RECTOR'S STUDY.

RECTOR, MR. TEMPLE, HENRY, CHRISTINA, RUTH.

Temp. We come, sir, in compliance with your request from the desk on Sunday last, that those parishioners who have not hitherto been confirmed, should visit and converse with you at this hour on the subject of the ordinance.

Ruth. I do not mean by calling to-day, to imply that I have *determined* to receive confirmation during the Bishop's approaching visit; but I came because you desired it, and because I wish to know what one should *do*, and what we are required to *renounce*, in order to be qualified for so solemn a service.

Hen. Your sermon on Sunday, the purport of which corresponded with the appeal of Moses to the Israelites—"Who is on the Lord's side," led me to painful reflections. Such instability as they manifested upon the occasion alluded to there, alarms me for myself. I am afraid to utter vows, and assume obligations. Scarcely had the ransomed tribes recovered from the panic of their flight from Pharaoh's hosts, when they were shouting before the molten calf, "These be thy gods, oh, Israel." Can it be, that human nature is still capable of the same?

Temp. There can be no doubt of it. If there were no other evidence, the history of one of the most refined nations of the globe, within the last half century, furnishes facts sufficiently conclusive of it.

Rec. This apparent incapacity to cherish lasting impressions, and at length even to feel a repetition of the most affecting considerations and occurrences, is an evil almost as common as it is deplorable. We discover it amidst all varieties of character and condition. A man who, at one period, would shudder in the chamber of a single corpse, beneath whose shroud much of the ghastly ravages of death is concealed, will, at length, learn to traverse undauntedly a field of carnage by night, that he may plunder and strip the mutilated and scarcely stiffened dead. A man who, in irrepressible consternation, would rush shrieking from his house at the first trembling of its walls in an earthquake, after dwelling long in countries subject to such convulsions, builds his neat cottage on the breast of the mountain which contains the elements of destruction, and is not deterred by its foreboding rockings, from planting there his vineyard; and sleeps without apprehension over the fiery gulph, which, bursting its barriers, may bury in a moment whole hamlets in ruin and devastation.

Chris. Strange inconsistancy! Amazing thoughtlessness and rashness!

Rec. So it is; and yet it is not without its parallel among ourselves, and every where. Observe the apathy with which we learn to see processions bearing the dead to the house appointed for all living, as they urge their way through crowded and tumultuous streets. And notice the absence of lasting convictions as the companions of our active pursuits and the friends of the social circle are stricken down, one by one, and removed into the world of unchangeable retribution.—But there is yet still stronger proof of the facility with which moral impressions are effaced.

Hen. You allude to the manner in which the truths of religion are heard and are forgotten.

Rec. I do. Many of those truths approve themselves readily to

the understanding and the conscience. The sovereignty of GOD, as just as it is irresistible,—who does not admit it? That the inflexible verity and faithfulness of GOD will cause Him to fulfil both his promises and denunciations; that they who will devise for themselves, independently of the gospel, conditions of salvation, must stand or fall, as they establish, or fail to establish, a meritorious claim to eternal life; and that they who hope for salvation through JESUS CHRIST, must comply with the terms of the gospel covenant; that our probation ceases at death; and that afterwards remorse for having here resisted convictions, and neglected graces, and refused to embrace the conditions of mercy, must everlastinglly prove unavailing;—these are truths almost as universally admitted as they are distinctly inculcated in the sacred volume. Add yet how many men act, not merely through infirmity and passion, but deliberately and intentionally, as if they believed neither the authority of GOD, nor the existence of any terms of salvation through the blood of JESUS CHRIST.

Temp. Yes, and death—of all subjects most, likely to affect one deeply,—what is sooner forgotten?

Rec. Scarcey any thing. The consignment of this cherished body of ours to solitude, the worm, decay, extinction, and the transmission of the stillconscious spirit to a retributive and unchangeable state;—judgment, too, the unerring, holy judgment of every secret, as well as known action, word, and thought, according to the standard of the gospel—what topics more capable of agitating the soul! and yet, as I remarked,—as men learn to rifle without emotion the ghastly dead, and to build and sleep in the neighbourhood of groaning and trembling volcanoes, so they learn to hear calmly, and without allowing it to produce the slightest practical effect, of the sovereign authority of GOD,—which they are insulting; and of the terms of salvation through CHRIST—with which they are refusing to comply; and of death—for which they are not preparing by a holy life; and of judgment—which, if GOD be true, must condemn them. And when under various forms the gospel cries out, “who is on the Lord’s side,” they are not afraid to sit still, as if they did not know that CHRIST himself said, “he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.”

Ruth. But, my dear minister, it appears to me that none deny that there are two classes or descriptions of persons in the world. Perhaps the most unprincipled and worthless admit that one of these classes may be esteemed good and the other bad, and that their future destiny may correspond with their present character.

Rec. No doubt. But—they differ in the designation and characteristics of these classes. Some appear to consider the class of unworthy persons, whose salvation is endangered, as comprehending a very small number—only those who die on the scaffold, or who have become infamous for their vices, or who have been *their* enemies. In the estimation of many, all that are not immoral are

the good ; all that are benevolent are the good ; the wealthy—if they be only liberal, and not proud ; the poor—if they be industrious and sober ; the professors of religion—if they be bold in their professions of faith, and zealous for the externals of piety,—these are the meritorious and entitled to salvation. But if, upon hearing such a proclamation as that which was made on Sunday from the pulpit, in the words of Moses, all these should range themselves among the followers of JESUS CHRIST, with no other qualifications than I have just described, can we imagine that they would be acknowledged by him to be his disciples and children ? Be assured—to judge rightly of this matter is of indescribable importance. The consequence of an erroneous estimation or classing of ourselves, are beyond measure deplorable. And we *must* act ; for divine providence is calling, and the religion of JESUS CHRIST is calling us, to decide the matter,—to pronounce upon it ; and we do decide, and act upon the opinion formed.

Ruth. But do you think, sir, that none have thus decided and joined themselves to the cause of CHRIST, but those who are confirmed and have received the LORD's supper.

Rec. Our attachment to any cause is most effectually tested, not by the feelings which we may suppose to exist in our bosoms, but by the conduct which it produces. Attachment to the cause of a prince is manifested by submission to his authority. Of those who do not receive the LORD's supper, there is, at least, a large class who have hitherto done nothing of themselves to affect their covenant relation to God ; who have uttered no vows, made no profession of faith and obedience, and who stand without the scope of the redeeming covenant, as infirmitiess, and accidents, and months, and years, are bearing them on towards eternity. And to all such, if there be any distinction between virtue and vice, any reality in the service of a holy God, every thing that is calculated to lead them to make their choice, and take their stand, is of the deepest moment.

Temp. In the whole course of one's life, scarcely any incident can, in this point of view, be as interesting as the privilege of receiving confirmation.

Hen. Especially if confirmation be considered a divinely instituted test of faith.

Chris. What is the principal design of confirmation ?

Rec. In confirmation we ratify the baptismal compact with heaven. This comprises all that can be said of its nature. But this is of vast importance. And being led to expect a visit from our excellent Bishop for the administration of this ordinance, I am urged by the most indispensable obligations of my office, to entreat those who were brought into the Christian society in their infancy, that they will make their adoption and membership an act of their own public approval. Still more forcibly will most of the arguments apply, to those who have no covenant relation to God.

Ruth. But, my dear minister, I cannot find that there is much written in the Bible about confirmation.

Rec. That really is the case. But the passages relating to it, are much more explicit than those which enjoin the observance of a sabbath on the first day of the week, or the administration to women of the LORD's supper. And moreover, the subject does not require much illustration, and what is written is perfectly intelligible and satisfactory.

Ruth. Did our SAVIOUR institute this religious rite?

Rec. No. The ordinance was instituted by the Apostles, under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, and acting with the authority which CHRIST gave them before his ascension, fully to organize his church; and it has been practised in the church without intermission through every subsequent age. It consists in laying the hands of the Bishop in prayer upon the heads of those who profess the faith, and devote themselves to the obedience, of CHRIST. The solemn imposition of hands is a ceremony of the utmost antiquity, employed in the designation of men to various offices; and by the Apostles in healing the sick, conferring gifts and graces, and in confirming in a public and solemn manner the engagements of believers to the service of God.

Hen. It appears to me that confirmation is not usually considered in the world as decidedly obligatory.

Rec. So far from its being an ordinance of a trivial or unprofitable nature, it is classed by St. Paul in the epistle to the Hebrews with baptism, repentance, faith, the doctrine of the resurrection, and of the final judgment. (*Heb. 6, 12.*) He speaks of it as one of the first "principles of the doctrine of CHRIST," fundamental in its importance, universal in its application, if neglected in youth, it is still binding in maturer age.

Chris. Where shall we find, sir, the most explicit instruction with regard to confirmation.

Rec. In the 8th chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, it is mentioned that Philip, who, at the time spoken of, fulfilled the office of a deacon in the church of CHRIST, went down to Samaria, and preached CHRIST to them, and multitudes were converted, and there was great joy in that city. The historian continues; "when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women. (v. 14.) Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the HOLY GHOST. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the LORD JESUS. Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the HOLY GHOST." Another instance of a similar kind is related in 6th verse of the 19th chapter of the Acts. It is the point to be remarked in both of these passages, that when the people had been converted and baptized in the name of the

Lord Jesus the full influences of the HOLY GHOST, notwithstanding, were not imparted to them. Baptism placed them in a covenant relation to God, and afforded them a conditional title to salvation. A subsequent public profession of faith, and application for authorised means of grace, were among the conditions of the title.

Temp. This arrangement, too, does not appear to have been made by a single Apostle.

Rec. No, but the assembly of those holy men, who were commissioned by the SAVIOUR to promulge his gospel, and organize his church, hearing of the converts baptized by Philip, sent two of their own order, of which bishops are the successors, who, when they had laid their hands upon them, with prayer, obtained for them, through this outward religious ordinance, the communications of the HOLY GHOST.

Hen. This then, I suppose, is the reason that none but bishops are allowed to administer confirmation.

Rec. Certainly: Not merely because it has been the immemo-rial usage of the church, but because Apostles were especially appointed and sent to perform a duty in a city in which others had baptized. St. Paul also confirmed in Ephesus those who were just baptized by some other minister. Possessing the highest qualifica-tions for promulgating the gospel, and not having time to afford the minute instructions which should precede and follow baptism, they were contented with maintaining the unity of the church, and the dependence of all its members and orders upon the chief shepherd, by thus bringing every believer within their own cognizance in this interesting rite.

Temp. There is singular plainness and fitness in all the circum-stances of this institution. But I believe that, if it were necessary, the writings of the early fathers contain a satisfactory comment upon it.

Rec. Yes, Tertullian who wrote in the latter part of the second century, observes that, "after baptism, succeeds laying on of hands, with prayer, calling for the HOLY SPIRIT." St. Cyprian, St. Jerome, and others, bear the same testimony. The ordinance corre-sponds, moreover, with a religious service practised among the Jews, who presented their children at the age of thirteen before the congregation. "The children then, having been properly in-structed in the precepts of their law, were thenceforth regarded as themselves accountable for their sins, and were styled sons of the precepts."

Chris. How naturally and beautifully the rite belongs to a system of religious education!

Rec. In the hallowed chain of means of grace, it is a link connecting the first ordinance, by which in infancy we obtain mem-bership in the Christian society, with that later and more exalted sacrament, which is the consummation of Christian privileges upon the earth. It is a measure of prudence, by which we approach,

with suitable caution, to the highest responsibilities of the Christian life. It is an act of justice and gratitude to our parents and guardians, thus publicly to avow our approbation of the principles in which they have educated us. It is a noble employment of the intellect in its earliest maturity, and of our character and influence before they have been sullied by much communion with the world, that we should declare our conviction in favour of virtue and holiness. It is a voluntary and heroic dedication of one's self to the cause of the cross, testifying that we are not ashamed of him that died for us. And it is a part of that moral discipline by which we are trained up, through a regular series of sanctifying dispensations, to a fitness for communion with God everlastingly.

Temp. How far above even the applause that genius elicits, the pride of wealth, the pleasure of sensuality, the boast of the infidel, is such a dedication of one's self to the nobler pursuits and objects of our being!

Rec. Yes, and how unmanly the indecision of those, who, unable to cast off principles of religion which great and good men every where venerate, cannot yet prevail upon themselves to practice them consistently; and who neither admired by the profligate nor trusted by the believer, neither enjoying the peace of their own conscience, nor the advantages which decided and persevering guilt may sometimes, for a moment obtain, subject themselves, both in the judgment of the gospel and of the world, to the imputation of a timid and ignoble spirit.

Chris. There can be no difference of opinion in this matter among those who will examine the subject candidly and dispassionately. But I believe the greatest obstacle which the ordinance often encounters, is an impression that it is a matter in the truth or falsehood of which one need give himself no concern.

Rec. If the Apostles, in the fulness of their divine direction and authority, instituted confirmation for the strengthening and renewing of believers, can any man maintain with impunity that we may safely slight and contemn it? May we imagine that CHRIST ordained trivial unprofitable ordinances; or that we can determine more justly than the Maker, and Governor and Judge of our spirits, "what we must do to be saved."

Temp. So far from confirmation being a duty of inconsiderable moment, may not infant baptism be regarded as imperfect, in the case of persons surviving to adult age without it?

Rec. Infant baptism is but a conditional compact between GOD and man, through the instrumentality of agents, the minister acting on the part of JEHOVAH, and the parents in behalf of their offspring. A period and means are appointed for consummating the covenant. To refuse that prescribed means is to throw back the compact. To refuse to ratify is virtually to annul it; especially when we consider that faith, which is the great comprehensive object of the revelation of GOD's will to us, if it be genuine, and if

it can have, even in a subordinate sense, any saving efficacy, must produce obedience to the several institutions of the covenant.

Hen. There is, I am told, another view of the subject, common, I should hope, only among those who are strangers or unfriendly to the principles of our church; I mean, that to receive confirmation is regarded by us as a matter of mere form and ceremony, and that no decided religious affections and principles are required in the recipient. Is not this a shocking doctrine, sir?

Rec. It would be a shocking perversion and abuse of sacred things, if any reflecting christian, and especially if a clergyman, could entertain such an opinion. But I have never met with one who did so.

Temp. I have occasionally heard such sentiments ascribed to members and ministers of our church; and it has always reminded me of venders of patent medicines, who are seldom satisfied with applauding their nostrums, without a sly intimation that all others are injurious or worthless, or at least are compounded with less care than their own; and who strive to magnify the cures *they* have wrought, by adding that regular and eminent practitioners had been applied to in vain.

Rec. It is worse than ludicrous, for it painfully reminds one of the spirit of the Pharisee, " thanking God that he was not like other men," and scornfully exclaiming, " stand aside I am holier than thou." There is no doubt that confirmation, like other duties, civil as well as religious, may be perverted and abused; and that nominal churchmen are sometimes found partaking of this Apostolic rite, as in every christian society, nominal professors of religion perform *all* their sacred exercises, as a matter of course, and because others, of the same age and under similar circumstances, are doing the same. But such views of qualification for the ordinances, however common *in the world*, are not less deplorable. They give a tone to the whole character, frustrate the whole design of the revelation of JESUS CHRIST, afflict the church, dishonour the gospel, and send the unsanctified soul into eternity burdened—in addition to all the other fruits of its vanity and passion—burdened with the guilt of profaning sacred things.

Temp. When we reflect upon the scope of our future existence, and the entire dependence of its eternal bliss or wretchedness upon our present conduct and principles, life assumes an aspect of the most awful importance. And yet, what a season of vanity and delusion, of frivolous pursuits and unprofitable cares, does the influence of the world, in a multitude of cases, cause it to be!

Rec. Yes; and how many sorrows and humiliations are required, before it can be chastened by the gospel! It is painful to trace the successive steps of what is esteemed a sufficiently religious life, in the judgment of the world. Upon the birth of a child, the friends and relatives are assembled, with much of the arrangement usually found to attend upon any other social circle;

and the infant heir of a fallen, guilty, perishing nature, during a momentary pause in the conversation, is placed under the most awful obligations to JEHOVAH, admitted a member of a spiritual society, and devoted to the service and imitation of a crucified Master. After fourteen or sixteen years passed in the usual occupations and indulgences of childhood, when perhaps the whole amount of christian education is comprised in the attainment of the church catechism, (time not having been allowed for much additional instruction of the minister,) the youth is advised that the next step in his religious life is Confirmation. To urge his reluctant feet to the altar of his God, he is assured that nothing material shall be required of him there; the alarmed parent himself would stipulate that nothing shall be abandoned, which could in any degree interfere with the accomplished introduction of the youth into society. It is represented to be only a proper measure, with which other young persons comply; and that while it exonerates the parents from farther responsibility, it confers moral independence on the child. With the asperities of a religious life thus broken down, and the path to heaven made broad and accommodating, the young candidate for immortality, ensnared into a profession of faith, practised by a few hours of study occasionally, to reply to the inquiries of his no less ensnared minister, coldly or tremblingly takes this first step in devotion. Through the constant influence of the examples, the conversations, and the books, which meet his eye and his ear every hour, his soul becomes enveloped in the most profound delusion respecting what is necessary for its safety. Provided with certain specious notions of rational religion, and some convenient explanations of scripture, he is able to ward off all the arrows of the gospel; and he is prepared to resent, as an infraction of his privileges, any future attempt to awaken him to a higher estimation of duty. Years roll over him, years of vanity, and passion, and care;—and, at length, wearied with the turmoil of pleasure, and made uneasy with the consciousness of approaching infirmity, and decay, and death, he begins, as the next matter in course, to make himself worthy—I am employing, you know the language of the world—worthy of receiving the LORD'S Supper. This he does, after as many paroxysms of devotion, once or twice in the course of a year. This series of ordinances is at last to be crowned by a prayer, and a few words of admonition from his pastor, in his chamber, before he expires. And thus the season of probation which CHRIST had purchased, which the Spirit would have sanctified, which mercy had protracted with infinite forbearance, which providence had blessed, upon which an eternity of Heaven or of Hell depends, being closed, the immortal but recoiling spirit is borne before that tribunal which *must* pronounce,

“ WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE GOD.”

Ruth. I confess you terrify me.

Christ. Such I have no doubt is the religious life, such the work of salvation, of multitudes who stand very fair in the world. And

yet externally, very little of this delusion and guilt may appear. The defect is far less in the ordinary action, than in the spirit.

Temp. But a spirit so dangerously in error is not peculiarly manifested in the preparation for this apostolic rite of which we were speaking.

Rec. Not at all ; it is that estimation or observance of *the institutions of christianity in general*, which curses a portion, a class, of all denominations of professing christians with spiritual barrenness ; which leaves the soul to encounter all the sorrows and perils of life, without the succour that redeeming love had provided for it ; and gives to infidelity its boldest triumph. And, in opposition to such a spirit, and to such views of confirmation in particular, I must repeat to you what I have said from the pulpit, that the obligations assumed in confirmation, cover the whole broad ground of christian duty ; that there is no offence, whether of omission or commission, which at any mature age, or under any temptations, you may with impunity commit ; that there is no virtue, no grace, which you are not bound to cultivate ; that the **LORD'S** Supper imposes no higher responsibilities ; except, that being usually received by those who are *more* mature in age and experience, less allowance can be made in their case for the effects of frailty and passion.

Temp. Because there is but one law upon obedience to which our eternal destiny depends. **God** can never make a compromise with his creatures, nor sanction, by lenity in enforcing our obligations, any kind or degree of negligence and impiety.

Hen. I am to understand then, that Baptism, Confirmation, and the **LORD'S** Supper all impose, without mitigation or qualification, the same duty, which is obedience to the whole gospel of **CHRIST**.

Rec. Yes, and your alternative is to live virtually a stranger to the covenant of promise, and to all the benefits of the **SAVIOUR's** death,—or to take the gospel of that **SAVIOUR**, as the model of your affections, and the guide of your whole life.

Hen. What a fearful accountability are we under ! How difficult to shun the opposite extremes ; and justly to pourtray for ourselves “ that wise servant whom his lord, when he cometh shall find watching.”

Rec. Not so. The character, from what has been said, may be easily defined. It is he who, neither setting aside the institutions of christianity, as without authority to govern him, nor embracing them merely from a principle of conformity to the practices of the world ; neither supposing religion to consist in ceremonial observances, nor believing that a saving—that is, a true and living faith exists, where a single divine ordinance or precept is knowingly and intentionally slighted, surrenders himself, without reservation, to the guidance of the gospel,—studies its plan of salvation, professes its faith, cherishes its spirit, builds his hope upon the stability of its promises. And all this he does, not

with the arrogant spirit sometimes discovered by men who appear to imagine it a condescension to be devout; and who will be required to advance no farther in piety than their pride, and habits, and prejudices, and (what they esteem) the requisitions of society from persons of their age or rank, will admit. But he is astonished at the condescending mercy of God, in calling him to a knowledge of salvation through JESUS CHRIST. It is his abiding desire and care to strengthen the principle of faith; because, conscious of his fallen, guilty, and perishing state by nature, he regards the gospel scheme, with all its provisions and arrangements, as the only means of rescuing him from utter ruin. And to imbibe the spirit of that system; to receive a new and spiritual life under the operation of its truths; to "live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God;" to be like clay in the potter's hand, as he casts himself in his closet, or in the sanctuary, before God, and invokes the transforming any elevating power of the ordinances, are the predominating and most anxious desires of his soul.

Ruth. Much as I should enjoy the privileges of a christian, I am sure I can never attain all that you have now described. I might as well go into a monastery at once.

Rec. And does this represent christian heroism as too difficult and painful an attainment? Is it then, in your estimation, too costly a privilege to be under the protection of God's providence—too painful a virtue to be grateful—too great a demand upon your faith and devotion, to act consistly among the friends of JESUS CHRIST?

Hen. A friend with whom I was lately conversing on this subject, appeared to think, that christians often obtrude their principles needlessly and offensively upon the world; that religion is a concern between man and his Maker, with which society has nothing to do; that we are not at liberty so to act as to imply a censure of our friends, who cannot discover a necessity for being as zealous as we may be inclined to be; that in the essentials of faith we all agree; and that if a man entertains a proper respect for religion in his own heart, there can be no necessity for much outward manifestations of it.

Rec. What degree of zeal would you esteem a satisfactory evidence of a friendly spirit, of a man's being upon *your side*, if you and your neighbour were engaged in a deep and lasting feud—if your property were at stake in the contest—if your fame and friends were involved in the issue? What are the lengths to which a partizan is accustomed and expected to go in political conflicts? And will you venture to offer your God what the world would reject with scorn? Shall CHRIST accept a service without zeal and attachment? each one of you—every man—is "the friend, or the enemy of CHRIST." To subserve the cause of the prince of darkness, it is not necessary to perpetrate atrocious crimes, nor to cherish passions diabolical in their intensity. To be devoid of the spirit of CHRIST, frustrates as effectually his re-

deeming labor and atoning death, and despoils the throne of God of its glory.

Chris. But after all that can be said in favor of ceremonial worship, is not the influence of religion over the heart the more important consideration?

Rec. I should undoubtedly answer that it is so, if the terms of your inquiry are properly understood. But you should not forget, that what you now call ceremonial worship, is the divinely authorised means of entering into and maintaining a saving covenant with CHRIST; and, that the life of God in the soul, requires the nourishment derived from those means, as the life of the body must be sustained by the means which nature is ordained to supply. I would have you always remember, that it is not the ordinance in itself, upon the efficacy of which, for salvation, so much stress is laid; but it is the principle of faith, which, according to the divine wisdom and decree, is tested and manifested by ordinances, and which is counted dead unless accompanied by works of holy obedience. In this view of the subject, one should weigh well his objections to so easy a service,—objections which would forbid his approach to the altar for any of its sealing privileges.

Hen. Do you tell me then, sir, that we cannot be saved without them; and that if we do our duty, and live without sin, God will notwithstanding reject us, if we should omit what you acknowledge are comparatively trivial ceremonies?

Rec. Who shall be esteemed the safe judge of what is our duty? Who shall determine what the Almighty shall regard and punish as sin? Has not God most solemnly declared, that “if any man shall keep the whole law, with a single exception”—that is, offending in one point—“he is guilty of all?” In other words, may not a man, by a single voluntary transgression, cast contempt and defiance upon the authority which enjoins the whole code? Has not CHRIST himself said, “ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you?” And would you esteem it a trivial offence in your child or friend, if you had solicited some small favor as an express test of affection, and were obstinately refused?

Ruth. If the service of confirmation were privately administered, I should have less objection to it. But I am sure that I could never go up publicly in the church to be confirmed before the whole congregation.

Rec. If you have *any* repugnance to it, I do not recommend that you should offer yourself to the bishop for confirmation. The mercies of God must be humbly and gratefully sought. But must I then infer that you are ashamed of a public profession of faith? Incredible as it would seem, such backwardness, I know, does sometimes exist. There are some who say, “at their age, so young,” and others, “at their age, so mature and grave,”—“in their station, so obscure,” or, “in their station, so elevated and dignified,” it would be humiliating, they would blush to come before the members of the christian society, for admission to their common privi-

leges. But you tell me, Ruth, that you could not appear before the congregation to make a public profession of faith in CHRIST. Are crowded assemblies of pleasure, are the public halls for the transaction of business, are legislative bodies, avoided by many through the influence of this principle? Did you ever appear in an assembly of pleasure? But, beholding the expiring Son of GOD upon the cross, enduring the torture and the ignominy of "the propitiation for your sins," you would excuse yourself from entering into a sanctifying and saving covenant with him, because of your backwardness publicly to acknowledge faith and devotion! I have only his own words to give you, in reply to such a pretext:—"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father in heaven. But whosoever shall be ashamed of me or of my words, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels."

Hen. I trust that I have no difficulties of that kind to contend with. But even since my baptism, I still sometimes fear my inability to fulfil the obligations assumed.

Rec. Such is the suggestion of remaining unbelief; as if GOD'S Spirit were insufficient to qualify man for obedience to GOD'S laws:—as if a refusal to *promise* allegiance could absolve us from the duty of paying it:—as if they who refuse and they who conform, do not live under the same obligation:—as if every inarticulate breath that we draw were not in itself, sustained in being, as we are, by GOD'S providence, a pledge and vow of our devotion.

Temp. Persons, in confirmation, "renew the solemn promise and vow that was made at their baptism;" and it was a part of that vow "to renounce the vain pomp and glory of the world." May not christians, sir, be sometimes perplexed to define justly the import of the terms, and to draw an accurate line between *sins* and innocent privileges, and those vain indulgences which the baptismal covenant binds them to renounce?

Ruth. Ah! I fear that would be a great obstacle in my path. If I were to be confirmed, I could never mingle in the world as I see so many professors of religion do; and at my age, and situated as I am, it is impossible for me now to give up the pomp and vanities which the church condemns.

Rec. The safety and innocence of some of our indulgencies, must depend, in a measure, upon the circumstances under which divine providence has placed us; and, in many respects, the experience of one, can furnish no standard of what is admissible in the condition of another. There is discretion, at least, in the precept that forbids us to "judge another man's servant; to his own master he standeth or falleth." The whole chapter (*Rom. 14th*) in which this caution is found, contains most valuable maxims, for the use both of the accusers and the accused, in regard to this subject. But there are, no doubt, usages and indulgencies in the world which properly belong to the class of its criminal vanities or pomps; and *some* of these, though possibly not in their own nature criminal,

become so to the christian, from the arrangements with which they are generally found to be allied. Another description, however, must be considered as *necessarily* and *uniformly* hostile to the spirit of the gospel. It is not a favorable indication of character to be very scrupulous in discriminating between these classes. The spirit of the christian will not admit great anxiety, lest religion should invade the prerogative of the world, and narrow too much its innocent pleasures; although, at the same time, he is not unmindful of the import of the Apostle's maxim, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST." I have often observed with pain, the solicitude manifested by frequent discussions respecting the pomps and vanities to be renounced, while the not less weighty portions of the same vow, "to avoid the works of the devil, the covetous desires of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh," certainly comprehending a duty of the highest obligation, seem to awaken but little concern.

Chris. But, sir, I should be very glad to know your opinion of some of those amusements which are generally sanctioned and defended in the world, and in which I sometimes see persons professing godliness venture to participate. Does not the abandonment or enjoyment of them furnish almost an unerring criterion of the christian, or of the worldly character?

Rec. Oh, not at all. To the heart not properly influenced by the spirit of true religion, it is much easier to make such sacrifices, and impose upon itself such restraints,—to endure penances, to strip off ornaments, and practise austerities, than to bring itself to the pure, and meek, and benign standard of CHRIST'S example, and CHRIST'S spirit.

Temp. I think I have heard you remark, sir, that in examining the extent and comprehensiveness of the injunction, "be not conformed to this world;" where any uncertainty exists, it is our duty to remember another maxim of the same Apostle, "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Rec. Yes, I think a proper regard to these two passages, would be calculated to cherish in us a suitable tenderness of conscience in regard to worldly conformity.

Hen. I find myself often drawn into conversation with several young friends on the subject of the moral tendency of the amusements of the world: and I, also, should be obliged, would you assign some of the reasons for supposing them unfriendly to growth in grace?

Rec. With all my heart. There are certainly institutions and practices in society, which are calculated to lower its grade of morals, which sap the foundation of its highest interests, while the best equivalent they can offer, is the cultivation of a spurious refinement. The world and satan have their faithful and zealous adherents. Vice, under any and every form, that can obtain a decent name, finds a ready advocate. Artful enticements, gaudy

and imposing descriptions of pleasure, even a shew of arguments, and appeals to your gratitude and benevolence are resorted to, to recommend what?—That you should be “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God;”—to promote your conformity to the world, which the gospel teaches “is enmity with him,”—to encourage your attempt to reconcile “the service of two masters.” The press pours out perpetual solicitations and ensnarements on these subjects. Here there is no timidity, caution, or sensibility. The followers of CHRIST then should not be backward in marking out “the narrow path that leadeth unto life.”

Hen. I scarcely need mention the sports of the ring and the pit, whose vulgar brutality ought to be sufficient to prohibit them, without the influence of christian principle.

Rec. No. Admonition and rebuke are wasted upon the subject of amusements in which the skill and the triumph, the emolument and the delight, depend upon the wounds, and the agony, and the blindness, and the rage, which one animal may be provoked to inflict upon another.

Temp. There are some games, sir, which are thought less incompatible with the christian character than many other popular amusements.

Rec. They will scarcely be esteemed so, if tested by the principles which you were advancing just now. I can only ask, is gambling, under any form, and to any amount, resorted to for “the glory of GOD?” Does it cherish amiable and disinterested affections? Does it recreate and invigorate the body? Does gaming prove harmless in its general influence upon society? Is it not liable to be abused,—to be inordinately loved,—to be employed to the ruin of individuals and of families? Will a recollection of many hours and evenings thus occupied, support the trembling spirit in its approach to the throne of its judge?

Ruth. But it is not gambling if one only plays for amusement, and not for money?

Rec. That may be true. But imagine what would appear to be the value of the distinction, if I should propose to one just about to acquire a knowledge of games, that he should pray, “Lord, lead me not into temptation to gamble.”

Hen. There is perhaps less to be urged against that amusement which tends to improve the qualities of that noble animal, the horse, and which appears to enjoy the sanction of the most refined countries of Europe.

Rec. I cannot think so. It is its universal tendency to draw from their homes and business into the suburbs of the city, a promiscuous multitude; and when thus assembled, who can deny that it affords the most favorable opportunity for the practice of every species of licentiousness? Here the gentleman, and the gambler, the youth and the profligate woman, the needy mechanic, and he who can ostentatiously squander large sums with impunity, are almost indiscriminately associated: and the loss sustained by

many individuals of such an assembly, in health, reputation, property, morals, can never be justly appreciated. The moralist will anxiously inquire, What equivalent can be found for so much mischief? Should it be supposed, that the bodily vigor, or intellect, or morals, of *a few* of the Africans in this country were to be improved by such means,—I submit it, whether there is a man in the country who would not indignantly reject the whole. There can be no rational doubt, that much cruelty to a generous and valuable animal is inflicted in the various stages of it. And, moreover, the fact of its advancing the main object proposed, is very much questioned by many most capable of appreciating the system. It will not, at least, admit a question, whether this city, or mankind at large, are compensated for the impulse given to dissipation, and for the fearful peril of accountable, immortal beings, by the partial improvement of a race of brutes.

Ruth. I hope, sir, you will judge more favorably of an amusement to which I am excessively attached. Can you think, sir, there is any thing criminal in mere dancing?

Rec. The question you propose is very much like that of a glutton, who, "willing to justify himself," might ask if there was any thing criminal in eating: or, like that of one devoted to ostentatious dress, and costly ornaments, who might demand, if it were sinful to be clothed. "But I will also ask you a question, and answer me." Do you find that the assembly room is more anxiously desired than the house of the **LORD**? Do you find that it has a tendency to cherish vanity and pride, and sometimes to awaken the passions of envy and jealousy? Is it liable to involve inordinate expenditures in dress? Does the preparation for it consume time unprofitably? Does it leave the mind disqualified for a return to the grave and quiet duties of domestic life? If much enjoyed, does it invest the world with a dangerous fascination? If attended with disappointment, does it not painfully try the affections and temper? Does it not obstruct or impair that moral discipline, by which immortal beings are trained here, in spirituality of heart, for the vision of **God** in glory? If your experience or reflections constrain you to answer all, or *any* of these interrogatories in the affirmative, must not the gospel reply to *your* question, "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

Ruth. But, living in society, as it is constituted, it is not easy for one to keep out of the way of all this.

Rec. It may be easier than to endure the penalties of a worldly spirit eternally. But you contribute to introduce or foster such a state of society. You *create* a supposed necessity for frivolous and dissipated diversions. You withdraw from safe and moral recreations the means of support; and then affectedly lament the necessity of complying with the customs of the world, which you acknowledge render the work of salvation so difficult.

Temp. Among the enticing indulgences of the world, there are none contended for more zealously than theatrical entertainments.

Do you think, sir, that they are necessarily as injurious as they are generally represented to be?

Chris. Oh you surely need not ask such a question. For what more infallible sign can be given of an unconverted heart than a taste and love for the theatre?

Rec. If you would have *me* reply, I must say, that the unchristian spirit may afford many and more unerring signs of its existence. Genius, literature, and taste are by no means the highest qualities that have sometimes adorned the stage; and it has numbered among its patrons, persons as distinguished for their worth, as eminent for their talents. But we have a higher standard of morals, than the taste of any particular age;—a safer criterion of piety, than the judgment and practice of any individuals, however eminent they may have become. There is no doubt a strong conviction on the minds of a large portion of believers of every christian name, that public dramatic representations endanger the morals and piety of the community. Through a combination of means, theatrical representations powerfully affect the senses, presenting every object and quality that belongs to this world,—its pomps, pleasures, principles, under a false, but imposing and fascinating aspect. The moral or rule of conduct inculcated, is often radically bad. Unworthy characters are so represented as to engage sympathy and tenderness, admiration of some of their specious qualities, and a very mitigated disapprobation of their vices. The higher exhibitions of the drama are almost invariably marked by profanity and irreverent appeals to heaven. At theatres, in many cases, every description of profligacy may find its gratification, or excitement. The hour, the scene, the personal decorations, the dance, the promiscuous assembly, the refreshments, the melody of the voice and the instruments, the gaiety of the incidents represented, or the subdued tenderness which tragedy may inspire,—what an assemblage of ensnaresments! How many perils to the soul! Is any thing wanting here to sensualize the heart, to bewilder the judgment, to lull and disarm principle, and to insinuate passion and vice into the unsuspecting bosom,—to make men “*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God!*” Is this a suitable recreation for the followers of a crucified master? Is it in correspondence with your baptismal obligations, your solemn vows to renounce the vain pomp of the world? approaching such a scene, would it not be mockery to pray, that it might aid the cause of the Cross? Is it a dignified entertainment for females to see depicted on the stage, what would not be tolerated by the fire side; to listen to the expressions of ardent but illicit passion, to gaze at the corresponding deportment, which justice to the drama may demand? I anticipate the reply, that you would witness, only the more unexceptionable representations. But, thus far—that is, by example and pecuniary contributions what more can the most unprincipled do, to uphold and sanction an institution, from which, mere regard to decorum must frequently banish you? If now, the

child of God, you are experiencing the power and privilege of his religion, you *need* not such gratifications. If, contending unsuccessfully with temptations, you have before you the whole awful work of preparation for eternity, have you time to lavish in this manner, have you grace to trifle with, have you principles which will secure your safety under temptation?

Ruth. But, my dear sir, my own observation entirely coincides with the remark which I have very often heard, that the theatre is capable of being made a school of morals, that it may impart the most virtuous impressions. I am sure I have often felt more deeply in the theatre, than I ever did in church.

Rec. So I imagine may those who witness the effects of violent passions every where. During a long intercourse with such scenes, the despair of the gambler, the occasional convictions and remorse of the most abandoned in the haunts of profligacy, the violence and bloodshed that proceed from sudden and uncontrolled wrath, may sometimes leave upon the mind of the observer salutary convictions. But who would frequent such scenes for the refinement of their taste, or the strengthening of their morals? The true question is, what is the acknowledged, common influence of the stage upon society at large,—upon the thoughtless and unguarded? If we infer what is to be expected hereafter from the character which in other countries, and in all ages, it has invariably assumed, we must pronounce the expectation of its moral influence to be a gross delusion. Did ever a dying parent, anxious for the piety and welfare of his son, enjoin him diligently to frequent the theatre, for the improvement of his morals?

Temp. There may be, however, more force in the remark that, as society is constituted, amusements of some descriptions are indispensable, and that the theatre and other entertainments that have been named, should be patronized to prevent a resort to worse gratifications.

Rec. Conclusive as this argument appears to many, let us not admit it, without inquiring for a moment the force of the terms employed. The various departments of natural philosophy, the practice and the exhibitions of the fine arts, music and painting in particular, the charms of poetry, the power of eloquence, the study of the vegetable and mineral world,—these are all admitted to be not only innocent, not only improving, but in the highest degree entertaining. The resources of pleasure are here perfectly exhaustless, and what is more, they are often adapted to the humblest condition of the mechanic and tradesman. And who are they then, that *must* have other amusements than those which I have named? Who cannot pass through life without other pleasures than may be afforded by the fine arts, and by literary and scientific associations—capable as they are of being brought down to the capacity and convenience of all? Are they practical believers in JESUS CHRIST earnestly engaged in working out their salvation?

Ruth. No, sir; it is meant that persons not possessed of a genuine devout principle, are in danger of going into criminal excesses if they are not allowed to enjoy the amusements of the world in the society of christians.

Rec. And is this then the powerful argument of universal application, for patronizing successively games, and theatres, and other similar amusements, that unless believers in CHRIST sanction—support—institutions acknowledged to be hostile to the spirit of the gospel, irreligious persons might choose others still more demoralizing! The children of this world must be encouraged in one corrupting gratification, to prevent their resort to another! They who are at enmity with GOD, and careless of eternity, demand some ensnaring indulgencies, and—therefore, it is admissible for christians to partake with them! In truth, there is a vast amount of delusion in the world.

Temp. And through that delusion, many do not realize that the power of the world is an unrighteous usurpation of the government of their hearts,—that there is any thing in it so very contrary to their welfare, and God's glory; and they are prone to suspect the understanding, or the honesty of the men, who would disturb them in their quiet enjoyment. The moral despotism of the world destroys the energy of one's principles, it deludes the understanding, it infatuates the will; its victims love their fitters.

Christ. When I observe the great number of passages in the Bible designed to warn us against the guilt and danger of being “conformed to the world;” and compare them with the lives of the great mass of those who are esteemed sincere in their piety, I am perfectly perplexed and confounded. It seems to me that the sacred writings must be very obscure, or believers strangely infatuated.

Hen. Is it not sir, difficult to define justly in what criminal conformity to the world consists?

Rec. Is it be difficult, it is a subject not less worthy of our most careful consideration. Perhaps all that the scriptures teach in relation to it may be comprised in this passage of St. John, (1 John, 2. 15.) “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Now against what is the admonition of the apostle here directed? In proclaiming, “Love not the world,” what does he enjoin upon you? Not to love to shed blood? Not to delight in rapine and violence, in drunkenness and profligacy, in swearing and lying? There is a wide range of duty beyond and above all this. The same apostle writes, “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” But the whole world of indevout men are not conscious of being even *tempted* to the commission of those atrocious crimes. “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, t'at leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in therat.” And yet, of this great multitude going down, in spiritual darkness, to eternal ruin, how small a proportion have ever come under the verdict, or scrutiny of an earthly tribunal! How large a proportion of them enjoy the

esteem, and confidence of society ! That love of the world which is the prevailing cause of ruin to so many souls, is far more universal, more deeply seated, more insidious in its assaults. It is the guilt to be apprehended by all,—which may reign in the cottage, steal into the cloister, glow in the zeal of the sectarian, unhallow the worship of the believer in the temple. And with a frightful universality and power, it lurks in the unconverted heart every where. What is it renders a man a plunderer of others, or a squanderer of his own property ? Conformity to the world in its pride. What is it renders another intemperate and glutinous ? Conformity to the world in its habits of luxurious indulgence. What is it causes a man to shed the blood of his friend ? Conformity to the world in its notions of honor. What tempts him to expose his heart to the excitement of passions, which when aroused, may hurry him on to every species of folly and crime ? Conformity to the world in its estimation of what is safe and innocent in pleasure. Conformity to the spirit of the gospel is the opposite of all this. Retirement, moderation, self-denial, spiritual vigilance, heavenly mindedness, simplicity and godly sincerity in conversation, the almost ceaseless exercise of prayer, a clear and firm conviction that every thing in which we allow ourselves to engage, may have a favourable influence upon eternity,—in other words, a reference in all things “to the glory of God,”—all these are characteristics of the believer’s heart and life.

Temp. If the injunction to come out and be separate from the world, were merely designed to forbid our association with persons as guilty as the vilest criminals and convicts, the urgency and frequency of the precept do not correspond with the nature of the temptation ; or, we must infer that the several classes of society are like the departments of a vast prison.

Rec. On the other hand, however, recollect we are not required to be distinguished from the world, only in those trivial observances which cost the heart no sacrifice. Nothing, it is admitted, is too small to be made an offering to **God**; and he who will not sacrifice a small gratification, to the dictates of conscience, and the interests of religion, would not surrender a greater. But living and mighty passions must sometimes be extirpated ; the most cherished objects abandoned ; warm solicitations resisted ; ridicule encountered ; scorn endured ; a moral martyrdom in some cases submitted to ; in furtherance of the purposes of the gospel of **JESUS CHRIST**. “They that are **CHRIST**’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.”

Hen. You named one principle, or test of principle, expressly asserted in the sacred volume as applicable to every instance of moral conduct, “whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.” How, sir, should that passage be understood ?

Rec. Not as teaching that each particular action should originate in this principle ; not that the motive and impulse to every measure should be a conscious design to advance the divine glov

But merely that such a design should be the uniform and abiding principle in all our conduct, and should prevent every thing inconsistent with it. We exist for God's glory. To magnify his forbearance we are preserved in life, notwithstanding our provocations of him. And it is for his glory, that redeeming love placed us under the discipline of the christian law. The most trivial actions of life may be subject to this fundamental principle. If a man's vocation in the world be attended by much bodily fatigue, he should fill his intervals of repose from labor with some of those pursuits, which enlarge our apprehensions of divine goodness, while they expand and refine the intellect. If his occupation be sedentary, and his mind liable to be wearied by the duration and intensity of its exercises, then means of invigorating the frame, while the intellect recovers its elasticity, become *his* duty. While this view of the matter seems to sanction the trite remark, that we must have recreations of some class, the necessity acknowledged, is not that of gratifying the frivolous propensities of a worldly spirit. Nothing connected with us may be regarded as strictly our own. Our time is not our own, for it is given us that we may do the work of God. Nor our health and strength, for we cannot preserve it one day; nor our intellectual powers, for they may be annihilated in an hour, by a blow, a fever, a sudden alarm. By no principle can we be justified in employing any part of our probationary existence in mere amusement, unless it be to derive augmented power for God's service. And without this ultimate object,—austere as the principle may seem,—no amusement of any kind can be deemed innocent. Should we study the loftiest productions of the poet, or listen to the most ravishing strains of devotional music, or contemplate on the canvass a delineation of the most affecting incidents recorded in history, at a moment when, under providence, we are called to active duty, when some helpless victim feels the malice or cupidity of the oppressor, when some heedless youth is threatened with ruin through the snares of the world, and when our agency might avert the evil, those indulgences, refined and improving as they are delightful, become criminal. Now, there is always some service to be rendered to God or man in our respective stations; and we are dismissed from that service occasionally, only that it may be discharged more effectually upon our return. In the selection of our amusements, however, it is not sufficient to justify them, that we, as individuals, experience no influence unfriendly to piety. If it be their natural, usual, acknowledged, tendency, to obstruct the progress of the christian life, to dissipate the fervors of the devout spirit, and to augment the power of the world over the heart, it is criminal to incur the danger. Nothing, in itself indifferent, continues to be so, when, through the sanction of our example it may ensnare the weak or the unwary.

Hen. However warmly young persons defend the privilege of enjoying what they consider the pleasures of the world, there are

none of them, I imagine, who suppose that such pleasures will be agreeable to their taste, or consistent with their religious attainments, when they shall be a few years older. Many in the congregation, I have no doubt, who will not be confirmed at the present season, are satisfied that they will be prepared for it by the next opportunity.

Rec. That is, in other words, they are unwilling yet to abandon what the church, and even they themselves, regard as "the vain pomps of the wicked world," for the privileges of the believer. *They pray God* to bless and provide for them some years longer, while they are indulging their love of the world, with its vanities,—the flesh, with its lusts,—and the devil, with his ensnaring schemes for their ruin,—and they leave to CHRIST the privilege of converting them when they are about to die. The present moment, or the present year, as they are apt to suppose, is their own. *This* they give to the world. The future which is God's, which they may never see upon the earth, that they appropriate to CHRIST and their salvation. This is plainly the design of those who conclude to postpone their compliance until the next opportunity. They forget the admonition, so impressively conveyed in the SAVIOUR'S cursing the barren fig tree. (*St. Mark, 11. 13.*)

Ruth. Perhaps they do not understand it, sir. I confess it always seemed to me hard, that the tree should be condemned for barrenness, when the historian acknowledges, that the season of bearing had not yet arrived.

Rec. It is in this manner, from imperfect acquaintance with his purposes and revelations, that men so often venture to impeach the wisdom and goodness of their Maker. It is a circumstance well known to naturalists, that among the various species of the fig tree, there are some kinds which bear fruit repeatedly during the summer. Of these, one description produces an inferior kind of fruit as early as the month of April; and the *blossoms* of the more valuable sort appear, when the first fruit is just ripe. Now it is imagined, most rationally, that the tree which our SAVIOUR beheld, was of this kind, known usually to produce an early fruit, though the season for the more valuable sort was not yet. Seeing its foliage from a distance, he knew that it was in a healthy state. But when he came near and saw neither figs nor the blossoms which would have promised the later harvest, "he cursed it," to use the language of St. Peter, and said, "let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And the fig tree withered away." And we are thus taught, 1st, that God requires, *at an early age*, the fruits of his providential and spiritual mercies. And 2nd, that when these are not rendered, he may pronounce a malediction, which inflicts barrenness upon the soul; a curse, which leaves us unable to produce, at a more mature age, the virtues of the christian character.

Chris. But this surely, does not afford a representation of the manner of God's dealings with his creature's now.

Rec. I have no doubt, that there is much more of this fearful retribution than many imagine. No withering sentence need come forth from heaven. No abandonment to desolating vices is necessary, to mark the man, from whom the Spirit is withdrawn. Such evidences, indeed, are sometimes exhibited. And in the obduracy or insensibility, the ruinous profligality, or the licentious excess, of the sinner, we discover the first of those successive stages, of moral debasement and chastisement, which shall pervade the whole dark career of his future existence. But these are comparatively rare instances. It is not the design of a gracious Providence to disturb social order and enjoyment, and to punish the unoffending, by inflicting judgments prematurely upon the impenitent. Tares are permitted to grow together with the good seed, until the harvest. But as St. Peter said, "be not unmindful of this one thing, that one day is with the **LORD** as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." And St Paul admonishes us, that although "He endures with much long suffering the vessels of wrath," yet "the day of the **LORD** will at length come, as a thief in the night." All things are easy with **God**. But nothing is *more* easy, than, without disturbing in the least the apparent order of his providence, or the dispensations of his religion, to seal up, under judicial blindness, those who bear leaves without fruit, professions without godliness, who have resisted and quenched convictions,—*all that is necessary, is to leave them under plausible delusions.*

Temp. There very often appears to be, sir, a strong sensibility to the propriety and decorum of the christian character, in irreligious persons. None seem to be more scandalized at the inconsistencies of believers, nor to judge them with more severity.

Rec. Yes; I have often heard such persons assert, that if *they* could entertain our opinions, they would infinitely surpass us in zeal and devotion; with our hope of immortality, that their lives should exhibit a series of the most splendid achievements to qualify them for it; with our sense of obligations to a crucified Redeemer, that no temptation should quench their love, no trials abate their devotion. The lukewarmness of christians, no doubt, casts both reproach and suspicion upon their principles. But you will generally find, that these lofty speculations respecting what professing christians ought to do, proceed from men, who fall far below the moral standard which they have themselves chosen. And, after indulging in reveries concerning the graces which shall adorn them at some future time, they return to the vanity, and passion, and malevolence, and excess, that are dishonourable to any rational creature, and inconsistent with every profession.

Hen. We have detained you, sir, for a long time, and are grateful for the patience with which you have answered our inquiries.

Rec. I shall rejoice to find that I have been able to satisfy your doubts, and confirm your convictions of duty. And now I must ask, are you on the **LORD's** side? Or, rather, I should say, the

angels of God are asking it, as they behold you and your companions called to the discharge of a sacred obligation. The church of CHRIST is asking it, interested, as the whole community is, in those who have "one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." God's recording spirit is asking it, about to register transactions upon which, in the great inevitable day, your eternal destiny shall depend. At this moment the decision is in your own hands. But remember,—the hour speedily approaches in which *you must adhere*, without the possibility of change, to the party that you may now choose. Even in that hour, midst the thunders and shouts, the triumph and despair, which shall attend the appearance in the clouds of CHRIST's awful tribunal,—even then it shall be asked, in a voice that shall startle all the assembled generations of men, "who is on the LORD's side." What choice, think you, will then appear to have been the wisest and the best? Strive to imagine something of the rapture of those that "have taken the LORD for their God." Call upon God for direction, for firmness, for wisdom, for love, to cast in your lot with the righteous. And in that day, the Messiah, in his kingdom, amidst the myriads of the angelic hosts, amidst the triumphant shouts of the redeemed,—CHRIST "shall not be ashamed of you."

Soldiers of CHRIST, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which GOD supplies
Through his eternal Son.

Strong in the LORD of hosts
And in his mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of JESUS trusts,
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in his great might,
With all his strength endu'd;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.

That having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may behold your vict'ry won,
And stand complete at last.

A Prayer for Grace to resign Ourselves to God.

My great and glorious Maker, my continual preserver and benefactor, my gracious Redeemer, thine I am by all the ties of duty and love, and to thee I should resign and devote myself by my own free choice and voluntary act, for thou hast formed me for thyself, and dearly ransomed me, after I had destroyed myself.

But with confusion and remorse, O LORD, I acknowledge that I have often sacrilegiously alienated myself from thee; I have foolishly and wickedly forsaken thee, to be under the power and servitude of my own vain humours and lusts. O my GOD, forgive and mortify this presumptuous and destructive selfishness. Suffer me no longer to withhold myself from thy covenant, nor expose myself to ruin, by attempting either to live in the world without thee, or, divided between GOD and mammon, to hope that I may be the friend of both. Make me consistently and cheerfully to surrender myself to the blessed Author of my being; that I may answer the end for which I was made, and attain the happiness whereof I am capable. For this I have no sufficiency in myself, but derive every good desire, and all my spiritual powers, and privileges, from union with my GOD. As all that are far from thee shall perish, as branches cut off from the living root that feeds them, let me never separate myself from my GOD. Be not thou far from me, for then will ruin be at hand; but do thou maintain thy right in me, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.

O my LORD, break all the ties that would detain me from thee, and keep me in thy fear and love to my life's end. Show me the vanity of the idols which would seduce my heart from thee; and upon my mind and conscience, upon my will and affections write—holiness to the LORD. Reign, LORD JESUS, supremely in me. May I judge as thou judgest, let thy will be mine in all things, and let me love and hate, and approve, and condemn as thou dost. Let my soul and body, and all the faculties and powers of both, be sanctified by thy spirit, guarded by thy providence, and employed to thy glory. Let all that I am, and all that I have, be thine. And may I never grieve to renounce all for thee, my satisfying, my everlasting portion. Be thou all in all to me. And may it ever be my great aim and endeavour to please thee, to promote thy glory, to imbibe thy spirit, to be conformed to thy likeness, that I may dwell with thee in the perfection of my glorified nature, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

For one about to be Confirmed.

Most merciful GOD, by whose gracious providence, I was born of Christian parents, and early dedicated to thee in baptism, wherein I was made a member of the holy catholic church, whereof

JESUS CHRIST is the head ; I most heartily thank thee for calling me to this state of salvation, and for bestowing upon me such blessed privileges.

And now, O **LORD**, that I am called to receive a further degree of thy grace and favour, I humbly beseech thee to enlighten my mind with the true knowledge and understanding of that solemn vow which I made at my baptism, and which I am about to ratify and confirm publicly in thy presence.

Give me, O **LORD**, unfeigned repentance for all my past offences : that the many and great sins I have committed, may not deprive me of the assistance of thy **HOLY SPIRIT**, but through the merits of **CHRIST**, pardon all that is past, and give me power and strength to mortify and subdue them for the time to come. I am unable, O **LORD** of myself to help myself, but I solemnly give myself unto thee for the rest of my days ; mercifully grant, that thy blessed **SPIRIT** may, in all things rule my heart, that by his holy inspiration, I may think those things that are good, and by his gracious guiding, may perform the same, through **JESUS CHRIST** our **LORD**. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving and Prayer for One recently Confirmed.

I desire with all my soul to adore and magnify thy name, O **LORD** **God**, for all the expressions of thy bounty, particularly for those renewed assurances which thou hast vouchsafed me, of thy favour and gracious goodness towards me this day. Let the blessing of the rite which I have received by the hands of thy authorised servant, the bishop, be and remain with me, and most powerfully help and support me in all trials and temptations, when I most need the aid of thy **HOLY SPIRIT**. Leave me not a moment to my own frailty, or without his assistance ; but, through his succors, enable me to adhere to that public and solemn profession of my faith which I have made in the presence of **God** and the congregation, and faithfully to perform the promises I have renewed, of observing and keeping thy holy commandments ; that walking uprightly before thee all my days, and being found watching when my appointed time shall come, I may, from a life of righteousness, be translated to a life of glory.

LORD, what is man, that thou art so mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him. And what am I, one of the most unprofitable and thankless of men, that the great **LORD** should deal so graciously with me ! O make me to know the things that are freely given me of **God** ; give me a heart deeply sensible of thy mercy, and steadfastly purposing to live to thy glory ; that I may shew my thankfulness for thy benefits, by obedience to thy precepts. Keep me mindful of the vows of **God** upon me ; and help me to live, as having my holy Redeemer now dwelling in me.

May the covenant into which I have now entered with thee, my **God**, and the spiritual succors derived from it be to me, health and

recovery under all my weaknesses and infirmities, safety and defence against all the attacks of my spiritual enemies; vigour and strength to all my holy purposes and resolutions; comfort and support under all the afflictions and calamities of life; assistance and direction under all difficulties and doubts; courage and constancy under all dangers and persecutions, especially in times of sickness, and at the hour of death; finally, let it be to me the pledge of pardon and peace in this life, mercy and favour at the day of judgment, and a never fading crown of glory in thy heavenly kingdom.

And O that the sacrifice of CHRIST JESUS, that sacrifice of himself, which he offered upon the cross, may atone for all the failings and miscarriages in my preparations and performances. And to him with the eternal Father and HOLY SPIRIT, be all thanks, and praise, and honour, and glory, ascribed by me, and by thy whole church, now and for evermore. Amen.

O happy day, that stays my choice
On thee, my SAVIOUR and my GOD!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell thy goodness all abroad.

O happy bond, that seals my vows
To him who merits all my love;
Let cheerful anthems fill his house,
While to his sacred throne I move.

'Tis done, the great transaction's done;
Deign gracious LORD, to make me thine.
Help me, through grace, to follow on,
Glad to confess thy voice divine.

Here rest, my oft divided heart,
Fix'd on thy GOD, thy SAVIOUR, rest;
Who with the world would grieve to part,
When call'd on angels' food to feast.

High heav'n, that heard the solemn vow
That vow renew'd shall daily hear;
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.

Come, for all Things are now ready.

A TRACT

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER

BY THE

REV. JOHN S. B. MONSELL,
CHANCELLOR OF CONNOR, AND RECTOR OF RAMOAN



NEW YORK.

1857.

Prayer.

“O LORD, from whom all good things do come,
grant to us, thy humble servants, that by thy holy
inspiration, we may think those things that are good,
and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”



COME, FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY.

I.

Do you intend to go, next month, to the Lord's Table?

No.

No? That is very strange. I thought you were a Christian.

So I am.

What! a Christian, and careless about Christ; a Christian, and forgetful of your baptismal covenant; a Christian, and yet daring openly to rebel against the last command of Jesus! I wonder you are not afraid to call yourself a follower of Christ, and yet say No! when he calls.

I do not wish to disobey Him. I am as unwilling to rebel against Him as you could be; but surely you do not mean to say I do either, if I do not come to the Table of the Lord?

I do mean to say that he is a Christian in name only, and not in deed, who habitually absents himself from that Holy Table.

Why! what commandment do I break? Not one of the ten, surely; and if not one of them, I am not rebelling against God. It may be very right and very useful, for those who view the matter as you do; but after all, it is only one of those things, in the doing or not doing of which, I am at liberty to please myself.

I admit there is no commandment broken, provided "Do this in remembrance of me," are not our Saviour's words. And you are at liberty to please yourself, provided this vow was never made for you at your baptism, that you "should keep God's holy

4 COME, FOR ALL THINGS ARE NOW READY.

will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life."

Granting those to be our Saviour's words, still you do not mean to say that they are as binding as the Ten Commandments?

I do. Who is to distinguish, and say what words of God are to be obeyed, and what are not? Or who will say that the sanction of Sinai's thunders was more awful than the tender and solemn stillness of the last Supper of the Lord?

Surely, you do not consider the neglect of the Lord's Supper as great a sin as blasphemy, murder, or adultery?

It is not for me to say that one sin, however little it may appear to man, is less sinful in the sight of God than another; sin is sin, and, therefore, deserves God's wrath and condemnation. Look at our Lord's explanation of the Ten Commandments, in Matt. v. You might, perhaps, think that anger is not so bad as murder, or lust so bad as adultery; and yet our blessed Lord said, "He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment:" and again, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." St. John, too, says, "Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer."

Then how small the number, by your rule, of those who are Christians in deed and in truth!

Small, alas! I fear: but call it not my rule; it is Christ's: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The children of disobedience are not the children of God.

And you mean to say that every one who habitually turns his back on the Lord's Table, is sinning against him?

I do. He is disobeying a command, neglecting a means of grace, and acting as if he did not need the atonement of his Saviour.

This is very hard. Surely a man may be so occupied with his necessary business, that he cannot prepare: what do you say then?

I answer by asking, If God should summon him to another world, will he say, "I cannot die?"

Or a man may be taken unawares; he may not have time to prepare: is he to go with all his sins upon his head?

Is he thus prepared to die?

Or a man may be at variance with his neighbour? Forgive him.

Or he may not be in a holy frame of mind?

Repent! In fact, any thing but disobey God, and throw away your own blessings.

Well, then, perhaps I may go next month.

Perhaps! I thought you were a mortal?

So I am.

One who may die before another opportunity occurs. And I thought you were weak?

So I am.

And requiring strength from above?

So I am.

And unable of your own self to do or think those things that be right?

So I am.

Well, and yet for all this you say, Perhaps! Perhaps I shall use to-day, when to-morrow never may be mine. Perhaps I shall seek strength, when I know I am weak. Perhaps I shall walk with God, when the great God hath stooped to say, that He will walk with me. Perhaps! sinner, perhaps you may "die in your sins."

But how can I know that I shall be prepared so soon?

Doubt not, but try. Stretch forth the withered hand—only believe; all things are possible to Him that believeth; kneel down in heart as well as form, and pray—

"O God, give me thy Holy Spirit for Christ's sake."

II.

But you, surely *you* will approach, next Communion, to the Table of the Lord?

No, not till the next great festival. I am always careful to communicate at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas. I have not missed these opportunities for many years. My father was ever careful to observe them, and I have never given up the custom.

And is this the way in which you speak of God's ordinance? You observe it because your father did so. A custom! You do not then look upon it as a means of grace?

I look upon it as a very proper proof that I am a Christian; and I should consider myself a very careless person if I neglected such a duty: and I cannot see any necessity for receiving it more frequently.

If you felt your own sinfulness and weakness, and the grace and strength which are conferred on those who faithfully receive this Sacrament, you would not say so. You would, on the contrary, feel that you could not go too often where such blessings are to be found.

I think that the solemnity of such an ordinance would be much diminished were it too frequently received. We should become too familiar with it to reverence it as we ought.

If we use it as a means of grace, this cannot be the case; for each time grace is received the soul becomes more holy, and learns to reverence more and more the things of God. It is only the careless receiver who will grow more careless the oftener he receives the outward signs: he who receives the inward and spiritual grace (and the faithful do so) must grow more cautious every step he treads. And no better proof of this can be given, than that drawn from the fact, that those who communicate most frequently in

every parish, will generally be found to be the most holy persons.

But surely it is impossible to be able to prepare frequently for Communion, as one does for those great feasts I have mentioned ; and without such preparation it would be wrong to draw near.

To what kind of preparation do you refer ?

The usual preparation that I suppose every one makes on such occasions ; a little more separation from the world, and a little more prayer, and a little more reading of the Bible, and a little more watchfulness over one's thoughts, words, and deeds.

And why could you not make such preparation every month, as well as three times a year ?

Because if I did I should be always preparing, and that, with one's other duties and engagements, could hardly be.

This is one of the great blessings connected with frequent Communion. He who owns its solemnity as he ought, feels that, from the moment he rises from the Holy Table, the work of preparation should commence again, previous to his next approach to this blessed means of grace.

Then he must give up the world altogether, and all its ordinary duties and pursuits.

Were this the alternative, better to give up this world than the next ; but neither duties nor pleasures need be given up, which are conformable to God's word. Why not continue through the year a little more separation, a little more prayer, a little more study of God's scriptures, a little more watchfulness over your thoughts, and words, and deeds. This is your preparation for each festival. Are you very unhappy while this is going on ?

No, not very unhappy ; but I feel under restraint : I only half enjoy the world, and only half enjoy the exercise I am engaged in. Somehow I feel as if each spoiled the other, and am not sorry when such seasons are past.

Because, (I know well your reason,) because they come so seldom that they have no time to become the habit of your heart. For a week you watch and pray, and then for months you live as you please ! God's word has no time to take hold on your affections ; that half-enjoyment of the world, to which you allude, shows what might be expected if you persevered in duty ; and that half-enjoyment of your duty shows what is the evil influence of the world in which you live. Thus each interferes with the other. The world wont permit you to be wholly God's, and God wont permit you to be wholly the world's. His grace is struggling with your heart.

And do you think such feelings would change were I oftener to approach the Supper of the Lord ?

I am sure they would. A constant habit of preparation would thus be formed in your heart, and looking from Communion to Communion as the longest period of absence from this closest earthly intercourse with God, if death called you in the interval, you would not be so likely to be found unprepared. He, who with holy contrite heart, is a constant guest at the Table of the Lord, will not feel that summons so strange which calls him to the bar of judgment. Go, then, and let your instant and constant prayer be,—

“ O God, for Christ's sake prepare my heart.”

The preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord.¹

¹ Prov. xvi. 1.

III.

But you, alas ! I need scarcely ask you ; I fear, from what I know of your life, there is little prospect of seeing you soon at the Supper of the Lord ?

Then you are much mistaken, I assure you : I intend to go there next month.

What ! is it while you are thus living in the world, in the whirl of its gayety and dissipation, every day and every night given up to pleasure, no thoughts appearing to fill your foolish heart but thoughts of self and sin ? Surely you will not thus dare to "eat and drink your own damnation, not considering the Lord's body."

Your words are very severe and very uncalled for. Such harshness might suit some fornicator, or blasphemer, or drunkard ; but surely it is misapplied to one who is moral in his conduct, and whose chief fault is, perhaps, that he enjoys what God has made him capable of enjoying—the pleasant world in which he lives.

Alas ! my dear friend, how you deceive yourself. Do you not know that "not to have God in all your thoughts," is sin ; that not only shall "the wicked be turned into hell," but "all the people that forget God ;" and that any one who is living as much in the world and for the world as you are, cannot have his heart in that frame in which alone he should venture to approach the Table of the Lord ?

I cannot see all this. It is true, I am not as sad and sanctimonious as some ; I cannot talk as much about religion as others ; but I am not living in any open sin, I have no enmity to any man, I wish all the world well, I don't know any grievous offence of which I am guilty, and, as far as I remember, it is only profane and wicked liver who are forbidden to approach the Table of the Lord.

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Did you ever read the service in which you must take a part on such occasions ?

To be sure. Do you suppose I never yet received ?

Well, and can you, with an honest and sincere mind, take your part in those services ?

To be sure I can. You don't suppose I would go there for the purpose of being a hypocrite before God ?

I thought you told me a little while ago, that your chief fault was enjoying the world, and that you had never committed any grievous sin ?

So I did ; and I repeat it again ; and I challenge you, who seem to know my life, to point out any such offences.

I am not going to do so ; I am not talking of what I can see, but of what you can feel ; and I confess I cannot imagine how you, under such circumstances, can say with truth, "I acknowledge and bewail my manifold sins and wickedness, which I from time to time most grievously have committed by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against me."

Oh ! those are not my words, they are the words of the Church ; I would not, if I could help it, speak so strongly.

I am sure you would not ; but still you do speak, if you speak at all, these very words, you either utter them or you do not utter them. If you do not utter them, you are mocking God, for you pretend to do so ; and if you do utter them, and don't feel them, in vain do you worship Him, honouring Him with your lips, when your heart is far from Him ; telling Him a solemn lie, on a solemn occasion, and in a solemn place !

But, if I am not quite in a fit state of mind to use those words, still I am very anxious and willing to be so.

Then you are determined, after your next approach

to the Lord's Table, to renounce, as you vowed in your baptismal covenant, "the pomps and vanity of this wicked world," and to live no longer amid its snares and sins

Why, if you mean by that, that I will not enjoy the world any more as I do now, I cannot say I am prepared to make such a promise.

And yet you will say, "I do earnestly repent, and am heartily sorry for these my misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto me; the burden of them is intolerable :" and a little after you will pray, "Grant that I may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life." Now, can any man, determined to return to his old ways, whatever they were, be sincere in his use of these words ? He loathes them, prays for grace to avoid them, and yet will be found devoted to them all again to-morrow.

Then you would advise me not to come ?

No. I would not give any such advice. I dare not say, Depart, when God has said, Come.

And yet you endeavour to prove that I shall be guilty of hypocrisy and blasphemy if I do come ; surely it would be better to stay away, than to come with such crimes on one's head ?

It is hard to say which is better or which is worse, to sin against God in your manner of coming, or to sin against Him in not coming at all : on either side lies an offence too fearful to contemplate.

If this be true which you say, then I have no escape. If I come, I sin ; if I come not, I sin : surely you do not mean to say there is no escape from such difficulties ?

God forbid ! There is a way of escape, but there is only one : it is narrow, but it is safe ; it is difficult, but it is certain. It is to be found in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the way, and the truth, and the life. Presumption on the one hand, disobedience on the other ; the children of obedience walk between. "If

any man be in Christ he is a new creature.”¹ “Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.”¹

But if I do not find that I am described in these words, am I not to draw near? I am afraid I do not “truly and earnestly repent,” according to your interpretation of the words, “nor intend to lead a new life,” in the sense in which you think I ought. What, then, is to be done?

Ask your own heart if this is a safe state for one to be in who may die to-morrow. If you knew to a certainty that your life must terminate next month, would you not feel the necessity for “striving to enter into the strait gate” without one moment’s delay? Why are you not as eager to be found in Christ, when you cannot be certain even of a day? Then lose not a moment; begin this very instant to use the means to which God has promised a blessing. Read his word; examine your own heart; pray for his grace; resist the devil; avoid those scenes and that society which draw your heart from God; study on your knees the sacred Service in which you are invited to take a part, until you find your soul, through the divine grace, becoming formed after the pattern there given; use, with diligence and care, every means of grace, public, family, and private; and be assured, that in so doing, He who has said, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” will meet you with his blessing, and fulfil His promise to your soul abundantly. Only be in earnest: act as well as feel; strive as well as pray; “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” remembering, for your humilia-

tion, as well as for your comfort, that "it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

"Prepare to meet thy God."

IV.

But you, of course you will come next month to the Table of the Lord ?

I fear not: in my present state of feeling I do not think I should venture.

You surprise me ! I did not expect to hear you say so ; I have observed you so regular in your attendance on other means of grace, and I know you to be one who so really endeavours to live to God, that I am distressed to hear you speak with doubt of your observance of this important duty.

The truth is, I am afraid to venture. I know the value of the ordinance, and the blessings which God, through it, is ready to bestow ; but still I feel I am not worthy to enjoy them. That awful warning ever rises in my way, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." I tremble while I repeat it.

And so should every sinner: it was for this purpose, we may be assured, that it was written. Man is so prone to presume, that had not this barrier been drawn round the Holy Table, he would have too often rushed to it in all the defilement of unrepented sin. If it was necessary to guard Sinai from the intruder, how much more necessary to guard from the unholy and profane the open banquet of our meek and gentle Master ? But surely you must feel that this is a barrier only to such intruders.

Alas ! I fear to me also: surely I must ever feel unworthy before God.

Ah ! here is your mistake. True, you must ever feel unworthy ; after you have done all, you are still

an unprofitable servant. The holiest man that ever yet drew near has found the feelings of his own heart expressed for him, in the touching words of our Service, "We do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table." But to be unworthy, and to eat and drink unworthily, are very different. The meaning of eating and drinking unworthily is given in the close of the verse in which the expression is found: it is this, "not discerning the Lord's body." He only who eats and drinks in faith can discern Christ's spiritual presence in that Sacrament. All others see but the outward signs. True, their lips may receive them, but this is not receiving the Supper of the Lord. They "take and eat," but not "in remembrance that Christ died for them." They do not feed "on him in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving." In fact, they discern the "outward and visible signs," but not "the inward and spiritual grace," "the Lord's body."

But if I want this faith, then I eat and drink unworthily?

Certainly you do; still, upon this question you should not decide, without careful examination. You should dread as much not coming at all, as coming unworthily: therefore, "diligently try and examine yourself, before you either presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup," or before you presume to turn away. Do you "truly and earnestly repent you of your sins?"

I trust I do: they certainly are a burden to me, which I long to be rid of; but still, alas! they cling on; however, I struggle against them daily.

Are you in love and charity with your neighbours?

Yes, thank God, I am in perfect good-will with all mankind; but this is comparatively easy, since all are so kind to me.

Do you "intend to lead a new life, following the

commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways?"

I do, God knows, He being my helper; but still I have so often intended this, and yet, after all, fall so far short of what I design, that I sometimes fear lest my intentions are only a mocking of God.

Do you, then, perceive no progress or improvement?

Oh! thank God, I do perceive some; but it is so little, that when I compare it with my own privileges, or with the progress of others, I feel it to be little better than backsliding.

Still, "draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling," for of this be well assured, that if you neglect this means of grace, you will soon have to mourn over a real backsliding in your Christian course.

You think, then, that I need not fear eating and drinking unworthily?

Need not fear it! Alas! you must be beyond this world, ere you can be rid of all such fear; but if you loathe, and strive to shun sin; if your whole dependence and hope rest on the atoning blood of Christ; if you resolve, with full purpose of heart, to lead a new life; then let not such fear keep you away. These graces, if they be found in your soul, are of God's planting, evidences of his love, and sufficient proof from what He has done, of what He can, and will do for you. Dread the groundless fears that would rob you of such precious intercourse with Him. It is the enemy of souls who is endeavouring to keep you from your best blessings. If your love and faith are not what you feel they ought to be, pray that they may be increased, but do not run the risk of their being diminished, by giving up one of your surest means of grace. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a sound mind." May grace, mercy, and peace be with you, strength-

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ening your hopes, and sanctifying your fears, and making both hopes and fears instrumental in abasing self and exalting your Lord. Farewell! The time is short, the work is great, the need urgent. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." "Behold," He says Himself, "I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Dear Reader, ere you lay down this little tract, with bended knees and lifted heart, offer up to God this prayer:

"That it may please thee to give me true repentance, to forgive me all my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and to endue me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend my life according to thy Holy Word."

"I beseech thee to hear me, good Lord."

"Son of God, I beseech thee to hear me."

THE END.

20

THE DESIGN
OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER;
THE
OBLIGATION TO RECEIVE IT;
AND
ANSWERS TO THE EXCUSES COMMONLY MADE
FOR NOT COMING THERETO.



"Do this in remembrance of me."

STEREOTYPED BY JAMES CONNER, FOR THE
NEW-YORK PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL TRACT SOCIETY.

NEW-YORK:



THE DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, &c.

THE cross of Christ is the glory of the Christian religion. It is the bright centre in which all the rays of spiritual light unite, and from which they proceed. It is so stupendous a fact in itself, that the Creator of all worlds, the great Jehovah, in the person of his Son, should take our nature upon him to expiate the guilt of our sins, that it may well have our constant meditation. Such tremendous sufferings, and such never-ending sorrows, are averted by the completion of this grand system; and such incalculable, boundless, and eternal joys, are obtained by this sacrifice of himself, that we shall, through eternity, regard with unspeakable joy this wonderful grace of God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a solemn ordinance, designed for a perpetual exhibition and commemoration of the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ. It is a representation to the outward senses of this great truth, that the only Son of God became man, and died for our sins. It teaches us by signs and emblems, those doctrines which the preaching of the Gospel brings before us expressly in words. Herein Christ offers himself to us with all his benefits, and we receive him by faith.

Its great design is to represent, or place before us, to com memorate, and to show forth the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, and to declare our expectation of his coming again.

IT IS A REPRESENTATION, OR PLACING BEFORE US, OF THE LORD'S DEATH, AS A SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

Dr. Owen, in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper, says in substance as follows:

"This sacrament is a more special and particular representation and setting forth of Christ as our Redeemer, than either the written or preached word. God has appointed him to be *evidently crucified before our eyes*, that every poor soul that is stung with sin, and ready to die by sin, should look up to him and be healed. John iii. 14, 15; Isa. liii. 5. Let faith represent Christ to our souls as here exhibited of God and given unto us, as tendered to us and received by us, and incorporated with us. Let us not rest in the outward elements and the visible sign. Christ in his love; Christ in his blood shedding

agony, and prayer; Christ in his death, is here proposed before us, even by him who has appointed the institution. It is a way of proposal full of tenderness and love. To every communicant there is, by the grace and faithfulness of God, and through his ministers, a tender of Jesus Christ, in his death, and all its benefits. The main question is, whether you will stir up your hearts to a new and fresh receiving of Jesus Christ, who is thus proposed and tendered to you by the love of your Heavenly Father."

This is a very refreshing view of the Lord's Supper. The promises and proposals which Almighty God makes to you by his word are more general, and have not that sensible and particular application to the individual which is made by this affecting and tender mode of proposing the blessings of the Gospel. When the minister says to you individually, *Take, eat*, and gives you individually the bread and the wine, how delightful is the thought that the blessings of salvation by Jesus Christ, are graciously tendered to you! O let us stir up our hearts gladly to receive them!

The Lord's Supper is designed to **COMMEMORATE CHRIST CRUCIFIED**. To commemorate is to preserve the memory of any thing by some public act. We find that God frequently appointed memorials of past transactions of magnitude, to declare to future generations his glorious works. Thus, circumcision was appointed as a memorial of the covenant with Abraham; the stones taken out of Jordan, were appointed as a memorial of their passing across that river on dry land; the passover, (in addition to its typical design,) was appointed as a memorial, a perpetually repeated memorial, of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. We should, if left to ourselves, soon forget our beneficent Deliverer, and the pride of our hearts is ever tending to lead us to rely on ourselves, rather than simply rest on his promises of salvation; and hence the need of this memorial. The connexion of the precept in which we are required to do this *in remembrance of Christ*, shows that we are called on chiefly to remember his death and sufferings. Let us not remember them transiently and slightly, but deeply, seriously, and constantly. Let us recollect at the same time his original dignity and glory, his wonderful humiliation and abasement, his extreme sufferings and painful death, his resurrection, ascension, and consequent glory.

We may at all times with advantage remember Jesus Christ as a **MARTYR**, witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate, (1 Tim. vi. 13.) and sealing it with his blood—as an **EXAMPLE** of suffering obedience even unto death, (1 Pet. ii. 21.) as a **CONQUEROR**, even in death triumphing over all his enemies; but it is particularly as a **SACRIFICE FOR SIN**, that we should regard his death when we surround his table.

Let not your minds be turned from this one point, but remember that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and keep in view the

benefits thereby procured for you. It was remarked, by a much-valued friend, (the late Rev. W. Richardson, of York,) that many sincere worshippers deprive themselves of much of that comfort and strength which they might have received at the Lord's table, by not having a single eye to the great object designed by that ordinance. Instead of keeping their minds steadily fixed upon Jesus Christ, as the Lamb that was slain, and dwelling on his sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, they have by turns meditated on a variety of other religious truths. They have endeavoured, for instance, to take a comprehensive view of the offices of Christ, and the various doctrines of his Gospel. This, though not so common a digression as vain and worldly thoughts, and not in itself a blameable one, may yet prevent our deriving that special benefit to be looked for in this sacrament, "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ," if it lead us from fixing our main thoughts on his death, for our sins. Those who wish to be comforted by this ordinance, should determine, while engaged in it, *to know nothing, and to think of nothing comparatively, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, and what is directly connected with that cheering and leading truth of the Gospel. It is here taken for granted that such know the evil of sin, wish earnestly to be healed of their spiritual maladies, and steadfastly purpose to lead a new life, for no other guests are invited to the Lord's table. But, on this supposition, no sense of unworthiness, none of the suspicions inseparable from conscious guilt, no respect to other religious doctrines, or topics, which in their season ought to engage our attention, should draw away our main thoughts from this capital truth of the Gospel. Nor shall we, if thus steadily and singly looking to the dying Saviour, depart from his table without some degree of strength and refreshment. It has been well observed, "There are seasons in the Christian's life in which the name of Jesus comes to his heart like a live coal from the altar, and brings with it a warmth, a feeling, and a joy, which angels might come down from heaven to share."*

While the Lord's Supper commemorates, it also *shows forth the death of Christ.* 1 Cor. x. 26.

There is a precept respecting the observance of the passover which will illustrate this subject. *It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service, that ye shall say, It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.* Exod. xii. 16. Similar to this is the showing, the declaring, and openly publishing the Lord's death at his table.

But what do you show forth, or declare? We declare the **FACT OF HIS DEATH.** It has been observed, that when a fact is such that men's outward senses can judge of it; when it is per-

* See Bradley's *Sermicus.*

formed publicly in the presence of witnesses; when there are public institutions kept up in memory of it; and such institutions commence, and are established at the time when the fact took place, it becomes a decisive and incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the fact. It is impossible that such an event did not take place. In this view, then, the continual commemoration of the death of Christ is, from age to age, a plain, manifest, and satisfactory evidence of his death to all mankind, and that death a sacrifice for sin. It is a standing proof of that great fact which is the foundation of all our hopes.

We declare THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH. That though perfectly innocent, and the only-begotten and the beloved Son of God, his bodily and mental sufferings were most painful and severe. The breaking of the bread declares his body broken—the pouring out of the wine his blood shed. And in how many ways was that body broken? Mark his anguish and passion in Gethsemane; his being smitten, spitten on, mocked, and buffeted in the hall of judgment! His enemies put a crown of thorns on his head, and they smite them into his temples. After they had scourged him, the devoted victim is compelled to bear his own cross, till he sinks under the load. At length the iron nails were driven through the tender nerves, and he was suspended on the accursed tree. Every part of his holy body was bruised and wounded. After lingering several hours in this agony, and receiving gall and vinegar in derision, he expired, amid the bitter taunts and revilings of those he came to save, and bearing the heavy wrath of Him in whose bosom he had for ever dwelt. And even after his death *one of the soldiers, in wanton indignity and derision, with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.*

We there declare THE TRUE CAUSE OF HIS DEATH. If Jesus Christ had deserved to suffer, if like other men he had himself sinned, then there would have been no cause thus to celebrate his death. But *he was wounded for our transgressions.* "In the ordinary course of justice," says Bishop Andrews, "when a party is put to death, we say, and say truly, that the executioner cannot be said to be the cause of his death, nor the sheriff by whose commandment he does it, nor yet the judge by whose sentence, nor the jury by whose verdict, nor the law itself by whose authority it proceeded. Sin, and sin only, is the murderer. In a certain sense it is so here. It was the sin of our polluted hands that pierced his hands; the swiftness of our feet to do evil, that nailed his feet to the tree; the wicked devices of our head that gored his head; and the wretched devices of our heart that pierced his heart; our sinfulness caused his death, and his death takes away our sin." It has been observed, the very sufferings which, so far as we are concerned, were the effect of our crimes, were, by the mysterious counsel of God, the expiation of them.—Christ was weary, that we might rest; he hungered, that we might eat the bread of life; and thirsted, that

we might drink the water of life. He grieved, that we might rejoice; and became miserable, to make us happy. He was apprehended, that we might escape; accursed, that we might be acquitted; and condemned, that we might be absolved. He died, that we might live; and was crucified by men, that we might be justified before God.

Thus the Lord's Supper was designed to represent, commemorate, and show forth the Lord's death as a sacrifice for sin. This is done for our own edification, as a testimony to the world, and as a prevailing mode of pleading his merits before God. It has been observed, that "What we more compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, wherein we plead the virtue and merits of the same sacrifice here, that our great High Priest is continually urging for us in heaven."

Whene'er, then, Christian reader, you celebrate this ordinance, we exhort you, in the expressive words of a late writer, "Look up to the offering of Jesus Christ once for all: look to him as dying for the remission of your sins, washing them away in his precious blood; suffering that you might be saved. And while you are kneeling under his cross, touched with the utmost possible sense of God's love, who gave his only-begotten Son, and affected with sentiments of the most tender devotion to him who gave himself for you, embrace also with your good will all mankind who he loved for his sake. Then rise up, by his grace, to the sober, continual practice of every thing that is good and excellent, and praiseworthy, and conformable to the sentiments and affections, and the obligations laid on you by his infinite love."

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER CONTAINS ALSO A VIRTU-
DECLARATION OF OUR EXPECTATION OF HIS COMING AGAIN.
We show forth the Lord's death, *till he come*, as the Judge of all men. 1 Cor. iv. 5; xi. 26.

By this ordinance we acknowledge that Jesus Christ will come to JUDGE THE WORLD. We show that we believe that a solemn day is approaching, when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*—that all mankind shall then be divided into two classes and only two, the righteous and the wicked—the future inhabitants of heaven and hell—of everlasting punishment and everlasting life. Partaking of the Lord's Supper, is an implied and public avowal of this expectation. How important is this avowal! How well calculated to restrain evil and encourage righteousness! How suited to fill us with a holy reverence of God, and a just fear of displeasing him!

But while this view inspires reverence, there is another consideration which should fill the servants of God with the liveliest hope and joy. He comes also as THE SAVIOUR OF HIS PEOPLE. Heb. ix. 28.

Had we no farther view than to remember and declare our Saviour's death, this ordinance would be full of comfort; but since we have not only to look back on what Christ has done, but forward to what he will do, new beams of light and joy are shed around this blessed institution. It leads us to look up to Jesus as a living Redeemer, gone to prepare places for us in the mansions of his Father's house, (John xiv. 2, 3.) and to comfort each other with the animating hope that, notwithstanding all the dangers, trials, and sorrows of our present state, we shall soon be admitted into his presence, and than *we shall ever be with the Lord.* In receiving the Lord's Supper, we declare our hope, that Christ will hereafter appear for us as our Deliverer; that however now we may be groaning under the burden of many sins, contending with our spiritual enemies, and often worsted in the contest; yet then he will have purified our souls and will *present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.* We declare our hope, that however the Christian may now be afflicted and despised, his wisdom will one day be universally acknowledged; the justice of God perfectly cleared; and his servants be openly owned by him, and forever blessed with him.

When this happy day arrives, then, and not till then, will the observance of this solemn ordinance cease to be a duty. "Then his people will no longer need such memorials as these; for they will incessantly enjoy the brightest vision of his person, and the richest fruits of his death."

The Obligation to receive the Lord's Supper.

When we consider the very small proportion of the congregation assembling for public worship, which usually remains to partake of this ordinance, it cannot be deemed unnecessary, to insist on the obligation which lies on the truly pious not to neglect it. Even in more religious congregations, where the ministry is most efficient, it has been calculated that not more than one fourth stay to partake of the Lord's Supper, while the proportion is, in general, much less.

The primitive Christians did not thus turn away from the Lord's table; the churches communicated every Lord's day, and it was the practice for ALL both clergy and laity, to receive.

What a blessing it would be to the Church, could it be again said of Christians, *they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people.*

Observe the reasons which should induce sincere Christians to attend to this institution.

THE EXPRESS COMMAND OF OUR SAVIOUR.—*This do in remembrance of me.* Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Here we have a plain and positive precept. It is so express that it cannot easily be mistaken. It has been objected, that such a rite is inconsistent with the spirituality of the Gospel, and has no moral foundation; but the very circumstance that the command rests on the ground of positive institution, and not of natural duty, makes the observance of it a direct acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, and the neglect of it a disregard of his precept. Hence, as Dr. Owen says, “Faith and obedience here give special honour to Christ as our Sovereign. It is, in fact, the most direct profession of the subjection of our souls and consciences to the authority of Christ in all our religion. Our reason for it is, Christ would have it so.” There is no uncertainty in the direction; it is not conveyed in dark and obscure terms,—THIS DO. The command is easy. No burdensome and costly sacrifices are required, no long and tedious rites and ceremonies are to be gone through. You cannot say it was designed for the twelve apostles, or for the Jewish nation only; for the motive applies to all with increasing strength as time rolls on, and the practice of the primitive Gentile Church contradicts such an interpretation. It is also against the express revelation made to the great apostle of the Gentile Church, for the instruction of the Gentiles. He begins his account of this ordinance by saying, *I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered to you.* 1 Cor. xi. 23. The command being positive, love to our Saviour constrains us to obedience. *If ye love me, keep my commandments,* applies to every direction of Christ, but with peculiar force to one given at the point of death, and directly concerning his own honour. The command being positive, the matter comes, where this ordinance is neglected, to this sad issue, “either Christ is not your Lord, or you are not his disciples;” for a Lord without obedience! a disciple without obligation! how manifest the absurdity, how evident the inconsistency!

2. THE MOTIVE ASSIGNED FOR OBEDIENCE.—It is peculiarly touching and affecting—in remembrance of Christ. In fulfilling a plain precept, you also gave a required evidence of affectionate recollection of a Saviour’s death. A grateful heart longs for occasions of testifying its attachment, and gladly avails itself of any opportunity of showing love to a gracious benefactor. To whom are you so much indebted as you are to Christ? In what instance can you possibly have equally strong reasons to show gratitude and affection?

3. THE UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH in the primitive ages strengthens this view of duty. The whole scope of the apostle’s reasoning with the Corinthians, (1 Cor. x. 16—21; xi. 20—34;) shows that the first Christians were in the frequent habit of eating this bread and drinking this wine. The mode of expression, (Acts xx. 7.) upon the first day of the

week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, naturally leads us to conclude that it was the practice of the Church at Troas to communicate weekly. In fact, it is known that it was in the primitive times received weekly, and in some cases oftener. Now if they, some of whom had seen our Lord die, and all of whom had the ardent attachment of primitive Christianity to their Lord, felt it needful and advantageous thus frequently to celebrate the memorials of his dying love, how much more should we, who live at so much greater distance of time, and in a period when *the love of so many has waxed cold?* This being an institution appointed by Jesus Christ, the Founder of a spiritual Church, and who gave his disciples his complete design when he established that Church, it was not like many of the ordinances of the Jewish state, merely supported by carnal reason, or suited to the national condition, or continued for a season, on account of their prejudices. It is evidently and eminently fitted to promote our spiritual improvement, and commanded in a manner which leaves us no reason to suppose that it was ever intended to be set aside, or abrogated, as the Church got more light and experience, but rather designed as a standing ordinance.

4. THE STATEMENT OF ST. PAUL PROVES THAT THE OBLIGATION IS STILL BINDING ON CHRISTIANS.—*As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 26. While the expression implies that the Corinthians were in the frequent practice of partaking of the Lord's Supper, it shows that it is the duty of the Church to celebrate it, till our Lord come to judge the world. It is surely an insufficient answer to this passage to say that the coming of Christ here intended is his spiritual coming, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in true believers; for he had undoubtedly come in this manner to many of the Corinthians, and yet they were in the habit of partaking of the outward ordinance, and the apostle directed them to continue the practice.

Hence we conclude then that the respectable, and in many respects, exemplary body of Christians, who from motives of conscience lay aside the outward observance of this Sacrament, are not borne out by scriptural authority, or primitive practice. But let us not judge or condemn them; but rather remember of each one, *to his own Master he standeth or falleth.* Our reasoning applies with peculiar force to those who have no such scruples, and yet usually abstain from the Lord's table. It leaves them without excuse.

The FREQUENCY with which we shall discharge this duty is indeed here left, as in various other cases, to our own conscience. Thus it becomes a trial of the state of our mind towards our Redeemer, a test of our affectionate remembrance of him, and an evidence of the warmth of our love to him. Judging by this test, is not Christian reader, the true state of the Church even in our favoured land, lamentably low? It may be said ge

nerally, that if your heart be right with God, you will omit no opportunity that occurs in the place where you worship, to pass by without enjoying this blessing. Thomas, when once absent from the disciples, lost the cheering sight of his Saviour which they enjoyed. Yet the frequency of the communion should not perhaps be such as may tend to prevent preparation, or the impression which such a solemnity has, when received at occasional intervals. It appears very desirable that it should be administered and received once a month, and on the great festivals of our Church. Nor need we fear that such a frequent reception will so abate our reverence in attending as to hinder our profit. The daily practice of prayer and reading the Scriptures has not such an effect. It is observable, that the Epistle which gives particular cautions against formality, gives the direction, *not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.* Heb. x. 35. Some pious ministers have found monthly communion to be more adapted to the present circumstances of the Church, than its more frequent administration.

Supposing the obligation to receive it be plainly proved, and fully admitted; consider farther, that to neglect it, is attended with aggravated guilt and danger.

IT IS WILFUL AND REPEATED DISOBEDIENCE OF YOUR SAVIOUR. He directs you, and his ministers invite you, to frequent his table. They say again and again, *Come, for all things are now ready.* But if you are living in the neglect of this ordinance, you greatly resemble those who first rejected the Gospel. They *with one consent began to make excuse;* and you know that it was said of them, *none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.* The soul was to be cut off, and the man was to bear his sin, that neglected to eat the passover. Numb. ix. 7—11. Have you not reason to fear that a neglect of the Lord's Supper will be attended with a similar danger?

IT IS SEPARATING FROM YOUR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN. You thus break off communion with your fellow Christians. By such conduct you declare that you wish not to be numbered with the true disciples of Jesus Christ, but had rather have your lot with those who neglect him.

IT IS A VIRTUAL UNDERRVALUING OF YOUR BAPTISM. That was the sign of your admission into the Christian Church. The Lord's Supper is the sign of your continuance in it. By neglecting it, you appear to count your baptism a privilege not worth maintaining. This is also done when you come to years of discretion, and it is your own voluntary act, even after, through the piety of your parents, you had been baptised. Is it not manifest, that if it had been left to your own choice, you would not have been baptised? Do not go thus far to renounce Christianity. It was a great sin to withdraw from professing it, in times of difficulty and persecution, (Heb. x. 26—31.) when it might seem to admit of some extenuation from the frailty o-

nan, and the fear of such dreadful sufferings as the primitive martyrs underwent ; but “by neglecting the Lord's Supper, (the peculiar rite of Christians,) do you not in effect deny the profession that you may have made of Christianity, and deny it, remember, in times of liberty and encouragement ?”

IT IS A PUTTING A SLIGHT ON YOUR SAVIOUR'S DEATH. The Lord's Supper is the memorial of his sacrifice. When you refuse to come, you do in effect declare, I will remember my worldly friends, my pleasures, my private pursuits, or other engagements ; but I will not remember my Redeemer in the greatest instance of his love. I will not confess my dying Lord : I will not honour his name ; I will not declare my hope in his cross. I wish to have no concern in his atonement and salvation. Christian reader, can you bear the implications which attach to this neglect ? Did Jesus die for you, and will you not obey one of his last, one of his most easy, one of his most delightful precepts ? The point is gained. Your heart yields. You will mourn over your past ingratitude, and determine to embrace every opportunity of remembering and publicly confessing a crucified Saviour. You see that not to do so, is in fact to renounce communion with Christ, and to say, “I can spend my time with ease and pleasure, in the scenes of idleness and trifling ; but I care not to be with Christ, and love not communion with him.”

BUT THE YOUNG may be especially addressed on this subject. The Jews, it would appear, (Luke ii. 41, 42.) took their children at twelve years of age, to partake of the passover ; and well would it be if Christian youth, at twelve or fourteen, under right impressions, and with intelligence and piety, began to partake of the Lord's Supper. When this season is neglected, life passes silently forward, habits of omission get formed, and dissidence and false shame strengthen them. It has been observed, “we naturally feel some degree of embarrassment in doing any thing, for the first time, that is attended with a considerable degree of interest, and public solemnity.” This difficulty increases with increasing years. I trust that those of my younger readers, whose hearts are renewed by divine grace, will therefore feel that now is the happy opportunity, now is the precise time, in which they should commence a practice which will soon become a blessed habit, bringing along with it a most important train of consequences, full of benefit to them all their days. It is a turning point of your life. Come to this table, and you are taking a most important step towards fixing you for a holy, useful, and happy life. Turn from it, and you are multiplying the difficulties which the world, the flesh, and the devil, ever present in the way to heaven. *The kindness of our youth,* (Jer. ii. 2.) is much remembered by our heavenly Father. Give, then, to Christ, the first and the best of your days.

Yet while we would invite you and all Christians, and re-

quire you in the name of your Saviour, not to neglect his plain command, we would press you also to *examine yourselves*, whether ye be in the faith; if you are still living in a course of sin, come not here; but yet keep not away altogether; repent of your sins, believe in Christ, devote yourselves to him, and then come, and you will obtain both edification and comfort.

In this chapter we have only considered the obligations in the way of duty; the privilege must be reserved for farther notice. Let us feel with Bishop Taylor, "Happy is that soul that comes to these springs of salvation, as the hart to the water-brooks, panting and thirsting, weary of sin, and hating vanity, and reaching out the hearts and hands to Christ."

Answers to the excuses commonly made for not coming to the Lord's Supper.

The obligation will be still farther felt, if we consider the excuses by which scrupulous or unwilling minds commonly justify their absence.

That which is most frequently urged, and which has perhaps the greatest weight, is this—they that receive unworthily incur great guilt; **WE ARE UNWORTHY, AND THEREFORE WE DARE NOT GO.** This excuse, seeming to imply a reverence to this institution, makes many easy, under a direct act of disobedience; yet, in fact, it arises from ignorance and unbelief.

It arises from **IGNORANCE**: for many persons do not make the evident distinction between being **UNWORTHY**, and receiving **UNWORTHILY**. The very best are unworthy. The guilty and the sinful are the very persons invited to come. A sense of our sinfulness is a needful part of preparation. If indeed a poor man resist, or cast from him, the bounty of the benevolent, he is unworthy of relief. If a sick man reject the medicine which would heal him, he is unworthy of health; but you see evidently that the poverty of the one is the very reason why he should take the offered relief; the sickness of the other is the most powerful motive to welcome and receive the physician's prescription. If then you are sensible of your unworthiness, and desire pardon and grace, you should ask them, not because you are worthy, but because you need these blessings, and must perish without them. You not only want them, but Jesus Christ invites you to come and receive supplies adapted to your necessities. If you are afraid of receiving **UNWORTHILY**, you will find in a subsequent chapter some information and directions which may remove this fear.

But is there not much **UNBELIEF** and presumption in staying away? You think, perhaps, that by going you are presuming. No; it is not presumption to accept our Lord's invitation, and

fulfil his command. For why was the precept given, if it were presumptuous to obey it? Take care lest you be found impugning the wisdom of the great Legislator. The presumption is, refusing to come, and not obeying the precept. Our turning away from the Lord's table does not prove our humility, but our forgetfulness of Christ's request. Is there no reason to fear that it arises not "from a tender conscience, but from a cold, careless, worldly heart?" Burkitt well observes, that "the reverence which our Saviour expects to this holy Institution, is a reverence of obedience." Some that object to receive on account of unworthiness, do, as it has been remarked, "venture at some great solemnities, as Easter, to approach this table, which makes it wonderful how they can reconcile their notion of unworthiness with their practice of receiving at such seasons; or else they must have at those seasons a better opinion of themselves than is consistent with Christian humility." But beware of unbelieving thoughts of your Heavenly Father's love; entertain not hard thoughts of the compassionate Saviour of men. They are highly dishonourable to his character, his word, and his promises, and are very prejudicial to yourselves. The Lord's Supper was never designed to be a snare for human frailty. Remember, that you are not coming to *Mount Sinai*, burning with fire, and covered with blackness, with bounds fixed to keep off the people; but rather to *Mount Sion*, to *Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things.*

Another excuse with many is, I AM TOO MUCH ENGAGED IN BUSINESS TO PREPARE FOR SO SOLEMN A DUTY. "I cannot," says Bishop Patrick, "believe that any man is so employed, that constantly, when he is to receive the sacrament, he must omit it, or be a greater loser. It is incredible, that this business must be done just at that time, and that none other will serve." He then shows the futility of the excuse, by stating, that if a large sum of money were to be given, every time a person came, few would resist this golden reason; they would, in that case, put aside all other business. Such a view may lead us to detect the real state of our mind. Consider if the true meaning of this excuse be not this: "I am leading a life inconsistent with the discharge of Christian duties; I am living an unchristian life; and if I die, my soul is lost forever." The discharge of your religious duties is your first and great business; and you had better let the body perish for want of its proper food, than the soul perish for want of spiritual food. Remember, however much you are occupied, you will one day stand in judgment before Him, who, though so engaged in providing for your salvation, as not to have time to eat bread, yet spent whole nights in prayer, rather than neglect to fulfil all righteousness. Yet after all, the due preparation for the Lord's Supper is often much mistaken. This subject will be afterwards noticed. Those

who are really so engrossed in this world's business, as to leave no time for their most solemn duties, should seriously inquire, whether much of that business that hinders them be not needless, or hurtful to their highest interests. But however this may be, no business of this world can justify the continued neglect of manifest religious duties. *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.*

A third excuse sometimes offered is, **I HAVE RECEIVED THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND HAVE FOUND NO BENEFICIAL EFFECTS FROM IT.** Perhaps you have mistaken the kind of benefit which you expected, and have looked for sensible and momentary comfort, instead of solid growth in grace. This ordinance has no miraculous power over the animal frame, but supplies the mind with powerful motives and considerations, whereby, through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to resist the attacks of our spiritual enemies. It is a means of obtaining spiritual strength from God. The Christian can not perhaps fully know in this world, what secret strength may thus have been given to him, and how he may have been kept from the ways of sin, and in the ways of God, by the motives here suggested to his mind. But we may very safely, as to this excuse, put it to every conscience—Can you really say, after you have deliberately prepared yourself for this ordinance, and received it with seriousness, that no resolution against sin has received fresh confirmation, no obligation to obedience has been strengthened? Or at least is it not presumptuous to question the efficacy, or deny the obligation, of attending upon an ordinance of God, merely because you have not yet derived from it all the benefits which you expected?

Again, it is objected, **I AM AFRAID THAT, WEAK AS I AM, I SHALL BREAK MY RESOLUTIONS, AND SO INCUR GREATER GUILT.** You forget that this ordinance is calculated to strengthen your resolutions. You forget that every temporal blessing you partake of, increases your obligations to serve God. You forget the greater guilt of neglecting a divine institution. But deliberately ask yourself, "Do I mean to give up myself to the unrestrained enjoyment of sin, and the certainty of endless ruin—or do I wish to be the disciple of Christ, and the heir of his glory?" If, indeed, you cared not about eternal life, and could be supposed awfully to choose eternal wrath, this excuse would be less inconsistent. But if you really desire to live with Christ, and to spend a blessed eternity in the mansions above, consider, that the admission of your weakness is the reason why you should constantly go to the Lord's table for new supplies of grace; and if you fall again, as all more or less do, come the oftener to the appointed means of weakening sin, and enlivening faith, hope, love, and every Christian grace.

Some have felt scruples about receiving, because OTHERS WERE AT ENMITY WITH THEE. But this is not founded on any

just interpretation of Scripture. This view would also condemn our Saviour, the twelve apostles, and the whole primitive Church! for none had such bitter enemies as they had at the very time this communion was most frequent.

Others feel the presence of some against whom they have a prejudice, or of whom they have reason to think ill, a sufficient excuse; forgetting the peculiarity of the apostle's expression—*he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself*, and not to his fellow communicants; forgetting our Lord knew that Judas would betray him, Peter deny him, and all forsake him, when he celebrated the last Supper with them. Yet we would not by these remarks justify indiscriminate communion.. The Holy Scripture, (1 Cor. v. 11—13.) as well as our Church, directs, that all open sinners be excluded.

Others receive ONLY at particular Festivals, not considering, as Chrysostom remarks, that “what makes it reasonable to communicate, is not merely a festival, or the time of a more solemn assembly, but a pure conscience, and a life free from sin.”

“Some Christians,” it has been observed, “inquire whether they should continue to approach the table of their Saviour, when their consciences are burdened with the guilt of any particular sin. To this the answer is obvious, because one end of receiving the body and blood of Christ is, to obtain the very blessings of pardon, and peace of conscience, which the objection supposes to be the most wanted. If indeed, unhappily, we have committed some aggravated offence against God, and the ordinary period of our partaking of the Eucharist be near, it may be expedient to abstain for that season from the Lord's Supper; but this abstinence must be with the express intention of more humbly confessing our sins before God,” that we may with sincere penitence and faith hereafter receive.

It may appear wonderful, even allowing the general darkness and corruption of the human heart, that there should be such a prevailing tendency in professing Christians to negligence, in a case where there are so many strong and tender motives for obedience. Some of the fears, possibly, may have originated from the once generally diffused Papal doctrine of transubstantiation, and from a general misconception of the apostle's reproof of the Corinthians, for their irregularities. This part of the subject will be considered hereafter.

Perhaps, however, at the root of all these excuses, there is an unsuspected, secret unwillingness of heart. Men have often a feeling of this kind. It would disturb their quiet, make them uneasy in their mind, and hinder them from enjoying the pleasure that they are wont to take in their sins. Let every one who neglects the Lord's Supper, examine this point well!

From the whole, we may conclude that there is nothing to discourage the PENITENT BELIEVER from a constant and inva-

riable attendance at this table. The duty is manifest, and the advantage great and evident.

And on the other hand, those LIVING IN the love and practice of SIN, may here see the grievous state to which their conduct reduced them. You are afraid of going to the Lord's table, lest you should eat and drink damnation ; but have you no reason to be afraid of the consequences of disobeying a plain command by staying away ? Your sins reduce you to a sad dilemma of danger. Nothing can deliver you from it but speedy repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no safety to any living soul, but in fleeing to him *who is able to save !* Let me then earnestly and affectionately entreat every such reader, to examine their own hearts, to ascertain without delay their true state before God, heartily to repent of their sins, and seek the salvation of the Gospel. Then, when you have experienced a real change of heart, when you are born again of God's Spirit, and have a good hope through grace, you will come and receive the Lord's Supper, not only without danger and reluctance, but with the greatest comfort and advantage.

We will conclude this chapter in the animating words of Bishop Patrick.

"Let no man therefore plead this, or that, in excuse for his not coming to the Lord's table ; but resolve hereafter carefully to perform so necessary a duty. Let the sinner quit his state of sin and death, and so come and eat of the bread of life. Let the ignorant come into the school of Christ, and proceed till they come to the highest form, to the upper room, where this feast is celebrated. Let those that are at enmity with their neighbours also come ; let them only first go, and be reconciled to their brethren, and so let them offer their gift. Let those that have a multitude of worldly employments come ; only let them leave them, as Abraham did his asses, at the bottom of the mount, and so let them ascend to heaven in their thoughts, and converse with God. Let the weak come, that they may grow in strength ; and let the strong come, that they may not grow weak. Let them who have fears come, that their hearts may be settled by the acts of a more lively faith ; and let them come who have hope, that they may rise to greater degrees of a humble confidence. Let those who have leisure accept of this invitation, because they have no excuse ; and let those who have but little leisure entertain it also, that they may the more sanctify their business and their employments. Let the sad and sorrowful approach, that their hearts may be filled with the joys of the Lord ; and let those that rejoice in the Lord alway approach, that their joy may be full."

A Prayer that God would prepare the Heart for the due receiving of the Holy Sacrament, and assist us in the Examination of our lives.

Most gracious and merciful God, who worketh in me both to will and to do, of thy good pleasure ; I bless thy holy name for the sincere desire thou hast put into my heart, of coming to thy holy table, and the opportunities which thou art pleased to vouchsafe me of renewing my covenant with thee. In an humble sense of my own weakness and insufficiency, to do any thing that is good of myself, I implore the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, in my honest endeavours to become a worthy partaker of the body and blood of Christ. Raise my mind from the cares and business of this world, to a serious consideration of heavenly things ; and be pleased to stir up in me pious thoughts and devout affections, that the meditations of my heart, being such as become this heavenly feast, may be well pleasing and acceptable in thy sight. Possess me with such a sense of the glorious Majesty before whom I am to appear, and of the great concern of my soul in the work I am going about, as may prepare me to approach thy table with reverence and circumspection. Help me, I beseech thee, so to lay to heart the sufferings of my Saviour, and thy tender love in the redemption of mankind, that I may steadfastly resolve from henceforth to serve and obey thee, and to continue his for ever, who hath redeemed and bought me with the price of his own blood. And, finally, do thou, who triest the hearts and reins, and knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising, graciously assist and direct me in the examination of my life. Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts, and bring to my remembrance all my most hidden and secret sins ; that having set my transgressions in order before me, and humbled my soul under a due sense of my vileness, I may be capable of receiving the gracious seal of thy pardon and favour in the blood of thy Son and my only Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Other Prayers, suitable to the Lord's Supper, from Bishop Wilson.

Blessed be God for ever, for this instance of his love to fallen mankind, in committing the miserable case of his unhappy creatures to no less a person than his own Son ! We are not worthy of all the mercies which thou hast showed thy servants. Grant, O God, that this wonderful love may not be lost upon me : but that, knowing my sad condition by nature, I may be truly convinced of the necessity and blessing of a Redeemer ; and that I may, with a heart full of gratitude, join with thy church in giving our devoutest thanks to thee, and in keeping up the remembrance of what thy blessed Son has done and suffered for us ; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, praise, and thanksgiving, for ever and ever. *Amen*

O Jesus, who hast loved us, and washed us from our sins, and purchased us by thy own blood—and didst ordain this sacrament in order to secure us to thyself, by a grate-

ful remembrance of what thou hast done and suffered for us, make me truly sensible of thy love, and of our sad condition, which did require such a sacrifice.

May I always receive this pledge of thy love—the offers of thy mercy, pardon, and grace, tendered to us in this holy ordinance, with a thankful heart, and in remembrance of thee, our great and best benefactor: In remembrance of thy holy example—of thy heavenly doctrine—of thy glorious life—of thy bitter passion and death—of thy glorious resurrection—of thy ascension into heaven—and thy coming again to judge the world!

And may I never forget the obligation thou hast laid upon us, to live as becomes thy disciples: and to forsake every course of life contrary to thy Gospel!—Cease not, O Lord, to love us, and by the grace vouchsafed in this ordinance, cause us to love Thee with all our hearts. *Amen.*

Blessed be God, who by his Word, and by the voice of his Church, hath called me to repentance! Discover to me, O thou Searcher of hearts, the charge that is against me, that I may know, and confess, and forsake the sins I have fallen into. Give me that true repentance, to which thou hast promised mercy and pardon, that I may amend where I have done amiss, and that iniquity may not be my ruin. And, O blessed Advocate, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, I put my cause into thy hands; let thy blood and merits plead for me, and by thy mighty intercession procure for me the pardon of my past offences:—That thou mayest say unto me, as thou didst unto the penitent in the Gospel—*Thy sins are forgiven*—so that I may go with a quiet conscience to thy holy table. *Amen.*

This is indeed the first and great command, *To love thee, O God, with all our heart;* for on this depends our salvation. But even this must be the gift of thy grace:—for this grace I now apply to Thee, to make my love and fear of Thee the governing principle of my whole life:—that I may always do what I believe will please Thee:—that I may carefully avoid what I know will offend Thee:—and that I may live as having Thee the constant witness of my thoughts, words, and actions.

Give me a steadfast faith in thy word and promises; a firm trust in thy power. Let the fear of thy justice keep me from presumption, and a sense of thy goodness from despair. Defend me from all those bewitching snares which destroy our love for Thee: from worldly cares; from all sensual and sinful pleasures; from evil company; from foolish diversions; and from every thing that may make me forget, that Thou alone art worthy to be feared and loved: Grant me these mercies for thy Son Jesus Christ his sake; whose love and death we are going to commemorate. *Amen.*

Gracious God, who hast given us precepts, and an example to walk by, let the remembrance of them be always seasonably present with me. Give me grace to practise them conscientiously. To reverence my betters, and all that are in authority, and especially such as are ordained to pray for, and to bless us in thy name. Let my love for Thee, and for my neighbour, keep me from all acts of injustice or injury to his body or good name:—let me never wilfully vex or trouble him:—never covet what is his, or envy his prosperity. May I ever be ready to help and comfort all such as are in distress. Give me grace to be faithful in all things committed to my trust: that I may never pervert truth and justice; never propagate slander, or raise evil reports, nor ever tempt others to sin. Give me the spirit of temperance and chastity, and grant that I may never provoke Thee, by any instance of uncleanness, to shut me out of heaven, where no unclean thing can enter. Give me grace so to order my conversation, that I may encourage others to live as becomes the Gospel of Jesus Christ: for whose sake I beg to be heard. *Amen.*

I beseech thee, O God, by that love which moved Thee to give thine own Son for lost mankind, give me a faith in thy promises for his sake, as firm as thy word, on which my faith is grounded:—and let me never presume upon thy gracious promises, without sincerely endeavouring to perform the conditions on which they were made, and without being zealous of good works, for which we were redeemed. May the remembrance of our Saviour's love, and of thy great mercy, be ever seasonably present with me, to keep me from despair! And may my faith in thy promises support me in the hour of death! May my Redeemer be my refuge, his blood and merits plead for me, that I may have my lot and portion with those whom he hath purchased with his most precious blood. *Amen.*

Praised be thy name, O God, for the death of thy Son, and the infinite blessings I have received thereby. Add this to all thy favours, I beseech Thee, that I may never forget these mercies:—never forget to be thankful for them:—but that I may preserve the remembrance of them in the manner which he hath ordained. I thank thee, O God, for that word, in which Thou hast caused these thy mercies, and his example, to be recorded. Make me truly sensible of that love which brought Him down from heaven:—

and how sad our condition was, which required such a sacrifice. May I learn by thy patience, humility, self-denial, and resignation, what virtues are most acceptable to thy Divine Majesty :—and may I take Him for my Lord, and Master, and Teacher, and Example ; and dedicate myself to thee, and to thy service, for his sake ! Amen.

This is my Commandment ; That ye love one another as I have loved you.

Hear, O my soul, what thy Saviour has commanded thee---He who loved us, and gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for us.

May this, thy love, O Jesus, be the motive and pattern of my love and charity for all mankind ;—where this hath not been my practice, I implore thy gracious pardon, and beseech thee to fortify my soul against all suggestions of *Satan*, or my corrupt nature and blind passions :—that I may always be prepared to go to thine altar, with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire and hope to die.

Thou, O Jesus, madest thine enemies thy friends, by laying down thy life for them---be thou my Advocate with the Father, for grace to follow thy heavenly charity and example, that *I may overcome evil with good* : that I, and all the members of thy family, *may love as brethren* :—that we may always meet at thy table as sincere friends, and part with true love and affection, as becomes thy disciples. Amen.

Grant, O God, that I may never draw down thy judgments upon myself either by turning my back upon this ordinance, or by going to it without thought, and unworthily. May thy mercy pardon what is past, and give me grace for the time to come, to consecrate my life to thee, and to embrace every occasion of remembering my Redeemer's love, and thereby securing thy favour, and my own salvation ! And, if it be thy will, grant that I may always find such comfort and benefit in this ordinance, as may encourage me to observe it with joy unto my life's end.

Suffer me to recommend to thine infinite mercy, the miserable condition of all such as neglect so great means of grace and salvation ; awaken all Christian people into a sense of this duty : open their eyes, and correct their mistakes, that they may be convinced, that this is the only means of making their peace with thee, and of rendering their persons and their prayers acceptable to the Divine Majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

* * Suitable Meditations and Prayers will be found in "The Companion for the Altar : or Week's Preparation for the Holy Communion Consisting of a short Explanation of the Lord's Supper, and Meditations and Prayers, proper to be used before, and during, the receiving of the Holy Communion, according to the Form prescribed by the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. By John Henry Hobart, D. D. Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New-York." To be had at the Depository of this Society, No 46 Lumber-Str. New-York.



[No. 157.]

A

SHORT AND PLAIN INSTRUCTION[•]

FOR THE

BETTER UNDERSTANDING

OF

THE LORD'S SUPPER;

WITH

**THE NECESSARY PREPARATION REQUIRED; FOR THE BENEFIT OF
YOUNG COMMUNICANTS, AND OF SUCH AS HAVE NOT
WELL CONSIDERED THIS HOLY ORDINANCE.**

BY THE LATE RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,
THOMAS WILSON,
LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

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A

SHORT INTRODUCTION
FOR THE
TRUE UNDERSTANDING
OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER, &c.

SECTION I.

THERE are two holy Ordinances or *Sacraments*, appointed by Jesus Christ, as most especial means of obtaining grace and salvation; which no Christian, who hopes to be saved, must wilfully neglect—These are, BAPTISM and the LORD's SUPPER.

It must be supposed that you have already been made partaker of one of these two Sacraments;—viz. That of BAPTISM, by which you were admitted into the congregation of Christ's flock,—were restored to the favour of God,—and had the *Holy Spirit* communicated to you, for a principle of a new and spiritual life; in order to awaken you, and to direct and assist that natural reason, with which God has endued all mankind.

But forasmuch as you have done many things contrary to the promise made in your name, when you were baptized—and will stand in need of greater degrees of *grace* and *assistance*, to enable you to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to do your duty in that state of life unto which the providence of God shall call you; You are there-

fore now called upon to be partaker of the other Sacra-
ment,—That of the **LORD'S SUPPER**: by which, upon
your sincere repentance, you may obtain the pardon
of all your past sins, and such other graces as you
stand in need of, to bring you to eternal life and hap-
piness.

Take care therefore, that you understand what you
are called to as well as you are able; and God ex-
pects no more.

For if you go to the *Lord's Supper* without con-
sidering the reason of that ordinance, and the very
great concern you have in it—without seeing the ne-
cessity and blessing of a *Redeemer*, you will go with
indifference, and return without such benefit, as you
might otherwise hope for.

To prevent this, you should seriously consider what
account the Holy Scriptures have given us of the con-
dition we are in, both with respect to this life, and the
life which is to come.

That is—That we are by nature sinners; and that
as such, God cannot take pleasure in us: And that if
we die before we are restored to his favour, we shall
be separated from Him, and miserable for ever.

This will lead you to enquire, how the nature of man
came to be thus disordered, and prone to evil; for you
must not imagine, that God, who is infinitely good,
created man in such a state of corruption, as you now
see and *feel him* to be; but that he must have fallen
into this wretched condition since he came out of the
hands of his Creator.

And so the Scripture informs us—in the third *chap-
ter of Genesis*, we have this following account of the
state of man, before, and after, the Fall:

That *Adam* and *Eve*, from whom sprang all man-
kind, *were created in the image of God*; that is, holy
and innocent; having *a perfect knowledge of their
duty, a command of their will and affections, and a
power, through the grace of God, to do what they saw
fit to be done.*

In this condition they were placed in *Paradise*, in a state of trial, with a promise of immortal life and happiness, if they should continue to fear, to love, to honor and obey their Creator; as also with an express warning, of the dreadful consequence of their disobedience.

Notwithstanding which warning, they, through the temptation of the devil, transgressed the commands of God; and, by doing so, they did not only forfeit all right to the promise of eternal life and happiness, but also contracted such a *blindness in the understanding*, such a *disorder in their will and affections*, as all their posterity feel to their sorrow; and became subject to sin, and the punishment of sin, which is misery and death.

Concerning the *nature* and *greatness* of this sin, we are to judge of it by the greatness of the punishment inflicted upon them, and their posterity.—*For God, being infinitely just and holy, could not inflict a punishment greater than their sin deserved.*

Now this was the occasion of that *universal corruption and wickedness* which you see and hear of in the world, and which you cannot but, in some measure, feel in your own nature;—*For, as the Scriptures inform us, Gen. v. 3. Adam begat his children in his own likeness*; that is, with such a depraved nature as his was then become.

And now consider into what a sad condition these unhappy offenders had brought themselves; and remember that this is your own condition, and the condition of all their posterity.

The law of nature and reason was in full force, and could not possibly be dispensed with. At the same time they found, by sad experience, that, as St. Paul describes the fallen state of man, *there was a law in their members warring against the law of their mind; so that the good which they would, they did not; but the evil that they would not, that they did.* Rom. vii

There could not surely be a condition more deplorable than this:—*To live only to contract evil habits; and,*

by doing so, to increase their guilt, to displease their Creator, and to leave an offspring as miserable as themselves.

This, therefore, gave occasion to God to manifest another of his most glorious perfections, that is, his infinite *goodness* and *mercy*.

For God foreseeing this lamentable condition into which they had fallen by departing from their obedience, his *goodness* had provided such a remedy, as that neither they nor any of their posterity should on account of *their fall*, be eternally miserable, except through their own fault.

He, therefore, in consideration of a *Redeemer*, one of the seed of the woman, who should make full satisfaction to the divine justice for the transgression, and who should *bruise the head*, or break the *power*, of that *serpent* (the devil) which tempted them to sin;—in consideration of this promised seed, God entered into a *new covenant* with them, by way of remedy for what was past, and could not be undone.

We have reason to believe that this *new covenant* was more fully explained to *Adam* than is set down in this short account given us by *Moses*, and as it is more fully explained in the *Gospel*; and which was to this purpose:—*That on condition of their sincere repentance and sincere obedience afterwards, they should be restored to the favour of God; and after death, to that life and happiness, which in their state of innocence was promised to them without tasting death;* which favour they had forfeited by their disobedience.

And when we consider that our *first parents*, now become sinners, stood in need of an *atonement*, without which, while under the displeasure of God, their very lives must be a burthen; and it being decreed by God, as it afterwards appeared, *that without shedding of blood there was to be no remission of sin*, i. e. without the death of the sinner, or some one in his stead; we do therefore conclude, that, at this time, God did appoint *sacrifices*, or *sin offerings*, to make an atone-

ment for the soul, and to foreshow the *sacrifice* of Jesus Christ (which we now commemorate) until he should be offered in behalf of them, and all their posterity.

And this appears from what follows in the next chapter of *Genesis*, where we find *Abel* by faith (that is, believing and depending upon this ordinance of God, for the remission of sins, until the promised Redeemer should come; we find him) offering a *sacrifice* which was acceptable to God, that is, a *sin-offering*, which his brother not doing was rejected.

But here take notice, and remember, that these *sacrifices* could not take away sin, but only through obedience to the ordinance of God, and through faith in the promised seed.

They were, indeed, very instructive and proper to lead sinners to repentance, and amendment of life, when they saw that their sins could not be forgiven, *but by the death of an innocent creature*, bleeding and dying before their eyes, to make an atonement for sin.

And as all good men, before the coming of Christ, did most religiously keep up the remembrance of the promised seed, and obtained the pardon of their sins, and acceptance with God, upon offering sacrifices through faith in a Redeemer, which was to come;—so all Christians since the coming of that Redeemer are obliged, as they hope for pardon and favour from God, to keep up the remembrance of God's great mercy, in sending us a *Redeemer*, and of what that *Redeemer* has done to save us; and this in the manner which he himself hath ordained.

Now, that you may be more sensible of, and thankful to God for this his infinite loving-kindness, and that you may be fully convinced of the necessity and blessing of a Redeemer, you ought to know and consider, that our *Saviour* and *Redeemer* came not until man had been tried in all conditions.—In a STATE OF INNOCENCE—UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS OWN REASON—and UNDER THE LAW GIVEN BY MOSES. All which methods of Providence, through the perverse

will of man, had been rendered ineffectual for the amendment of the world. Notwithstanding which, such was the goodness of God, that he sent, after all, *his own beloved Son*, to take our nature upon him, and to assure mankind of the tender love which he had for his poor creatures, which were ruining themselves, without perceiving the danger they were in.

This was the *promised seed*;—promised to *Adam*, as *he* that should break the serpent's head, or power of the devil:—promised to *Abraham*, as *he in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed*;—promised to the people of *Israel*, as *that prophet* whom they should hear and obey at their peril:—Lastly, promised to *David as one whose kingdom should have no end*. And indeed it was with *this promise*, that God supported the spirits of all who feared him, and were in fear for themselves, until the fulness of the time for his appearance should come.

And now this *promised Redeemer* being come, he first showed by his own example, recorded in the *Gospel*, how men must live so as to please God. And the law of nature, as well as the law of *Moses*, having through sin been much obscured and perverted, he explained them, and gave us such other laws and rules as were absolutely necessary—to mend our nature—to restore us to the image of God—to keep us from backsliding, and—to fit us for heaven and happiness.

And because in the decrees of God, as was before observed, *without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin*; and it being impossible that the *blood* or *life* of any other creature, or of any mortal man, could take away the guilt and punishment due to sin; our gracious God, both to give to mankind the greatest token of his love, and at the same time to show how great his hatred to sin is, by the greatness of the punishments it required, *He sent his own Son to be the propitiation for our sins*; that is, to make satisfaction to his justice, and to take off the just displeasure which he had declared against sinners.

And his Son (blessed for ever be his goodness) knowing how dreadfully sad the condition would be of all such who should live and die under the displeasure of God and what inconceivable happiness they would deprive themselves of; he therefore, moved with compassion for so great a calamity, undertook to obtain their pardon.

In order to this, he clothed himself with our flesh, that, as *man*, *He* might suffer what our sins had deserved; and, as *he* was the *Son of God*, he might make a full and suitable satisfaction to the divine justice, offering himself a *sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world: and for the joy of delivering so many millions of souls from misery, he endured *the death of the cross*, and all the afflictions leading to it which we find recorded in the Gospel.

And, by this worthy *sacrifice*, all mankind are restored to the favour of God, and put into a way and state of salvation; God having, for his Son's sake, promised to pardon all such as shall repent and forsake their sins, and *bring forth fruits meet for repentance*; as also to give his Holy Spirit to all such as shall sincerely desire him:—And, lastly, to make them eternally happy after death, if during this short state of trial, which is designed to mend our corrupt and disordered nature, they endeavoured to observe the rules which he has given them, and which are absolutely necessary to make them capable of heaven and happiness.

Stop here awhile—and adore the infinite goodness of God, who did not overlook lost mankind, but sent his Son to redeem us.

He might in strict justice have required men to have lived up to the law of *nature* and *reason* given in the state of innocence, on pain of being for ever separated from his presence; but instead of that, he has been graciously pleased to accept of our sincere though imperfect obedience, and of our sincere repentance when we have done amiss, and return to our duty.

Consider this seriously:—And you cannot but express your thankfulness after some such manner as this

THE PRAYER.

BLESSED be God for ever for this instance of his love to fallen mankind, in committing the miserable case of his unhappy creatures to no less a person than his own Son!—We are not worthy of all the mercies which thou hast showed thy servants. Grant, O God, that this wonderful love may not be lost upon me; but that knowing my sad condition by nature, I may be truly convinced of the necessity and blessing of a Redeemer; and that I may, with a heart full of gratitude, join with thy Church in giving our devoutest thanks to thee, and in keeping up the remembrance of what thy blessed Son has done and suffered for us; to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, praise, and thanksgiving, for ever and ever. Amen.

SECTION II.

The End and Institution of the LORD'S SUPPER.

St. Paul concludes his first Epistle to the *Corinthians* with this remarkable direction:—*If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema, Maranatha*: that is, Let him be separated from your communion, as one under the displeasure of God, and, without a timely repentance, in no possibility of being saved: nothing being more grievous in the sight of God, than for a sinner to slight the greatest instance of his mercy that was ever offered to man, as well as the only means of his salvation.

To prevent this, and to hinder sinners from forgetting (which they are but too apt to do) this token of God's infinite love, and to fix the love of Jesus Christ more surely in our hearts and memory, he himself hath taken care, that his love and mercy should throughout all generations be remembered; he did therefore ordain this Sacrament as a memorial of our redemption, and

of his love for us ; as a pledge to assure us of it : and as an outward means and sign of testifying, as well as increasing our love to him.

The holy apostles of Christ, who were present when he first administered this Sacrament, give us the following account of its end and institution :

They signify to us in the first place, that *this Sacrament* was ordained by Christ the same night in which he was betrayed ; and after they had observed the *Pasover*, which had been ordained to preserve the memory of their great deliverance from the bondage in *Egypt*, and which did prefigure, and was a prophecy of a much greater deliverance, which *Jesus Christ* was to be the author of, not only for them but for all mankind : and which *prophecy* was surprisingly fulfilled by that people, without knowing what they were doing, when they crucified *Jesus Christ the true Paschal Lamb*, the very *same* month, the very *same* day of the month, and the very *same* hour of the day, that the *Paschal Lamb* was first ordained to be sacrificed.

Now, after the *Paschal Supper*, as the Apostles relate it—*Jesus Christ took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat : this is my body, which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me.* He took also the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, *Drink ye all of this ; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins : This do, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me : for as oft as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come.*

In obedience therefore to this command of *Jesus Christ*, who has delivered us from a much greater bondage than that of *Egypt*,—the Christian Church keeps up the memory of *his love, his sacrifice, and his sufferings and death*, after this solemn manner.

First, as an acknowledgment, that our lives, and all that we eat or drink to preserve them, are owing to the

bounty of God, we present upon *his table*, by the *hands* of his own minister, a portion of his creatures, the best we have for the support and comfort of our natural life, namely, *bread* and *wine*. After this the *bread* and *wine* are consecrated, the *bread* is broken, and the *wine* poured out, to represent the death of Christ, whose body was broken, and whose blood was shed for us.

Then the *minister of God*, as the steward of Christ's household, applies these blessings to every person, who receives this Sacrament, in this devout prayer:—*The body and blood of Christ, which were given and shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.*

And we may be assured of it, that this *Sacrament* will be to every worthy communicant, what the *tree of life* would have been unto *Adam* and *Eve* in *Paradise*;—and that *as they*, had they continued obedient, would have been in no danger of temporal death; even so *we*, while we feed on this *bread*, now endued with a life-giving spirit, and live as we ought to do, are in no danger of death eternal.

These being *pledges* to assure us, that as certainly as bread and wine do nourish our bodies, so do these seal to us all the benefits which Jesus Christ hath purchased for us, by his sacrifice and death.

And when any *Christian* does wilfully, and for want of faith, deprive himself of this spiritual food, he falls, as our *first parents* did, into a state purely natural, and destitute of the means of grace and salvation.

For the happiness of the world, and of every soul in it, depends upon the sacrifice of Christ; of which we are bound to keep up the remembrance after this solemn manner.

*That, whenever we pray for any favour or blessing, we may remember to do it *in his name*: That, whenever we are so unhappy as to have done any thing which may displease God, we may remember to pray to be forgiven *for Christ's sake*.

For God grants whatever we ask, and which he sees to be for our good, when we ask *in faith*, that is, *in*

his Son's name; and therefore the Church concludes all her prayers in these most prevailing words:—*for Jesus Christ's sake*.

In one word, we do by this Sacrament keep up a continual correspondence with our Lord in heaven, and hold communion with him, and with all the members of his body, which receive nourishment and growth from him, as the branches from the tree in which they are grafted, and from which, when they are separated, they can bear no fruit, and are only fit to be burned.

As every Christian is obliged, at the peril of his soul, to observe it, so the duty must be such, as every one, even the most unlearned, may understand, if it is not his own fault.

And so indeed it is; for as an *Israelite*, *Lev. i. 4.* under the law, being obliged to lay his *hand* upon the *head* of his sacrifice, confessing his sins, and laying them, as it were, *upon that creature*—as he did easily understand, that this was to show him, that death was the due reward of sin: that this ought to humble him before God, and to give him the greatest abhorrence of sin, which could not be pardoned but by the loss of the life of an innocent creature.

As this was plain to the meanest *Israelite*, even so the most unlearned Christian, when he considers, that our Lord Jesus Christ became a sacrifice for us, and that on him all our sins were laid,—on him who knew no sin;—he will easily understand how sad our condition was, which required such a sacrifice:—that this therefore ought to humble us,—to lead us to repentance, to make us fearful of offending God,—and to abhor those sins which cost *Jesus Christ* his life, before God could be prevailed with to pardon them.

He will also easily understand, that the love of Christ, and the remembrance of his death, ought to be very dear to us; and that the oftener we remember it in the manner he ordained, the more graces we shall receive from God; the firmer will be our *faith*, the surer our *pardon*, and the more comfortable our *hopes*.

of meeting him, not as an *enemy*, but as a *friend*, at whose table we have been so often entertained.

And now, if you have considered what you have read with any degree of attention, you will pause awhile,—until you have expressed your gratitude for this mercy, after some such manner as this following:

THE PRAYER.

O Jesus, who hast loved us, and washed us from our sins, and purchased us by thine own blood,—and didst ordain this Sacrament in order to secure us to thyself by a greatful remembrance of what thou hast done and suffered for us, make me truly sensible of thy love, and of our sad condition, which did require such a sacrifice.

May I always receive this pledge of thy love,—the offers of mercy, pardon, and grace, tendered to us in this holy ordinance, with a thankful heart, and in remembrance of thee, our great and best benefactor; in remembrance of thy holy example, of thy heavenly doctrine, of thy laborious life, of thy bitter passion and death, of thy glorious resurrection, of thy ascension into heaven, and of thy coming again to judge the world!

And may I never forget the obligation thou hast laid upon us, to live as becomes thy disciples; and to forsake every course of life contrary to thy Gospel: Cease not, O Lord, to love us; and by the grace vouchsafed in this ordinance, cause us to love thee with all our hearts. Amen.

SECTION III.

How a Christian ought to prepare himself for this Sacrament.

As the above account of this holy ordinance is easy to be understood, even by the most unlearned Christian; so the preparation required is such as will neither

puzzle the understanding, nor burden the memory, nor take up too much of the time of those that are engaged in the most necessary employments of life.

The Church had regard to all her members, when she gave this short and plain direction to such as prepare to go to the Lord's Supper :

That they examine themselves,

Whether they repent them truly of their former sins?

Whether they stedfastly purpose to lead a new life?

Whether they have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ?

Whether they have a thankful remembrance of his death? And,

Whether they be in charity with all men?

Now forasmuch as all Christians who are capable of examining themselves and their own consciences, are bound, as they hope for salvation through Christ, to go to this Sacrament : and because young people are often at a loss how to examine themselves upon these several heads : here follow a few plain directions, which they that can read should read with care ; and they that cannot, if they have a true concern for themselves, will find some good Christian, who will be glad to read it to them, and do thereby a work which must be well-pleasing to God.

The FIRST HEAD on which you are to examine yourself is, concerning your Repentance.

By what you have already heard concerning *the Fall of Man*, you understand how all men became subject and prone to sin ; and you cannot but feel it to be so by sad experience. We are assured also, and this by the Spirit of God, that without a sincere repentance no man must hope to be saved.

Now by repentance you are to understand a man's condemning himself for having done any thing displeasing to God :—either such things as God has forbidden, to keep us from ruining ourselves ; or by omitting such duties as he has commanded, in order to fit us for happiness when we die.

So that if either the *fear* of God's displeasure, or a *love* of him who has been so good to you, will weigh with you, you will most heartily condemn yourself for every thing you have done contrary to his will and command.

You will also beg him most earnestly to forgive you what is past; and you will promise and resolve, through his grace and help, not wilfully to offend him again.

And, lastly, you will not forget to pray for his *grace* every day of your life; without which your best resolutions will come to nothing.

This is *that repentance* concerning which you are required to *examine* yourself, before you go to the *Lord's Supper*.

Most people, it is true, are ready to own that they are sinners, and cry, *Lord forgive us*; and this too often without any great concern or purposes of amendment.

But this you will not think sufficient, when you seriously consider that the *end* and *punishment* of sin are not to be seen in this life.

If, therefore, you stand in any fear of the judgment of God, set yourself seriously to consider your past life; see whether you have not lived, or do not now live, in any known *sin*, or *evil habit*; of *lying*, for example: or *swearing*, or *drinking*, or *filthy talking*; of *uncleanness*, of *keeping loose and profane company*, of *following unwarrantable pleasures and diversions*; or, of *leading an idle, useless, sinful life*.

If this has been your case, resolve to break off all these, and all such like evil ways, which are displeasing to God; condemn yourself for having so desperately broken the commands of one who can *destroy both body and soul in hell*: consider the vows that are upon you,—and despise not the goodness and forbearance of God, which is designed to lead you to repentance.

If you ask when you are to begin this necessary work, (if it is not already begun) the answer is short the very moment you ask the question; and this, because if you find an unwillingness in yourself to set

about it now—that unwillingness will every day increase: very probably you will never repent, unless God, by his judgments, or by the sight of death, shows you your sad error, when it may be too late to be of any real use to you.

Now, if these considerations affect your heart, as sure they will do if you have any regard for your salvation, represent your desires to God in some such words as these following :

THE PRAYER.

BLESSED be God, who by his grace, and by the voice of his Church, hath called me to repentance! Discover to me, O thou Searcher of hearts, the charge that is against me, that I may know, and confess, and forsake the sins I have fallen into. Give me that true repentance, to which thou hast promised mercy and pardon, that I may amend where I have done amiss, and that iniquity may not be my ruin. And, O blessed Advocate, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, I put my cause into thy hands; let thy blood and merits plead for me, and by thy mighty intercession procure for me the pardon of my past offences. That thou mayest say unto me, as thou didst unto the penitent in the Gospel—*Thy sins are forgiven*; so that I may go with a quiet conscience to thy holy table. Amen.

SECTION IV.

Concerning the Purposes you are to make of leading a NEW, that is, a CHRISTIAN LIFE.

In the first place, take especial notice, that God accepts of our *repentance on this condition only*, that we may afterwards glorify him by an holy Christian life.

And as he delivered the people of *Israel* from bondage, not that they might do what was right in their own eyes, but that, becoming an *holy nation*, they might be an honour to their deliverer—*Deut. xiv. 2.*

Even so Christ has redeemed us from the bondage of sin and *Satan*, that he might redeem us from this present evil world, and purify unto himself *a people zealous of good works*.

And as the former perished, that is, all such as did not answer the end of their deliverance, so most surely shall we do, if we do not obey our Redeemer.

Your duty to *God*, your *neighbour*, and *yourself*, you have known from a child :—be assured of it, you will meet with temptations from the *devil*, the *world*, and your own *corrupt heart*, both to neglect and transgress the commands of God.

It will be absolutely necessary therefore, that you arm yourself betimes, both with *holy resolutions*, and with this *holy ordinance*, which you are preparing to go to, that you may be able, through the grace of God, to go on in the way of salvation.

Now your duty to God is, To believe in him, to fear and to love him, with all your heart and soul ; forasmuch as you stand indebted to him for all you have, or value, or hope for, in this or the next life.

Do but consider how you would behave yourself, if you were but half so much obliged to any man on earth ;—How dearly would you *love* him ! How often would you *think* on him ! How would you strive to *please* him ! How would you be grieved if you should be so unhappy as to offend him ! How soon and earnestly would you beg his pardon to be restored to his favour !

Now, if you thus love God, it will appear in such instances as these : you will have a very great regard for *every thing* that belongs to him :—you will not use his name for any idle or wicked purpose :—you will religiously observe the day consecrated to his honour and service.—you will carefully attend the *house* and *worship* of God —and behave yourself with reverence and devotion while you are in his presence. You will hear his *word* with attention, and have a great regard for his *ordinances*, and for the *persons* whom he hath appointed to administer them.

If you truly *fear* God, you will part with any thing as dear as a *right hand*, or a *right eye*, rather than provoke him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.

If you believe him to be the fountain of all good, you will pray to him daily. And if you put your whole trust in God, as it is your duty to do, you will endeavour to be pleased with all his dealings with you,—you will never murmur at the ways of his providence nor suffer your heart to fret against the Lord. And especially you will never attempt to better or secure your condition by any evil ways: believing assuredly, that God can and will make you full amends in the next life, for what you want and suffer in this, in submission to his will.

Lastly, your duty is to be thankful to God. The way to be so is, to look upon every *mercy* you receive as the gift of God; every *danger* you escape, as owing to his *care* and *providence*; every *good thought*, every *good purpose*, every *occasion of doing good*, as the effect of his *good Spirit*.

Think, and act, and purpose thus; and it will be as natural to thank God for all the dispensations of his providence, as it is for you to beg any blessing from him, which you stand in most need of.

Stop awhile, until you have considered these things, and until you have your sense of them in the following prayer:

THE PRAYER.

This is indeed the first and great command, *to love thee, O God, with all our heart*: for on this depends our salvation. But even this must be the gift of thy grace; for this grace I now apply to thee, to make my love and fear of thee the governing principle of my whole life; that I may always do what I believe will please thee; that I may carefully avoid what I know will offend thee; and that I may live as having thee the constant witness of my thoughts, words, and actions.

Give me a stedfast faith in thy word and promises; a firm trust in thy power. Let the fear of thy justice

keep me from presumption, and a sense of thy goodness from despair. Defend me from all those bewitching snares which destroy our love of thee: from worldly cares; from sensual and sinful pleasures; from evil company; from foolish diversions: and from every thing that may make me forget, that thou alone art worthy to be feared and loved. Grant me these mercies for thy Son Jesus Christ his sake; whose love and death we are going to commemorate. Amen.

SECTION V.

Your Duty to your Neighbour and Yourself.

THIS is the *second great command*, and will require the most solemn resolutions you can make, before you go to the *Lord's Supper*.

Consider therefore whether you can sincerely resolve as follows:

I dare not, I will not, be indifferent how I lead my life. I know what God has commanded me, and I purpose sincerely to do it.

I will, in the first place, be obedient to the lawful commands of my *superiors*, and especially to *those who watch for my soul*. I do sincerely purpose in all my dealings to remember the command given me by my Saviour, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*: and therefore I will make a conscience of doing *the least wrong* to any man; of using any *deceit, fraud, or oppression*; or of taking advantage of the *ignorance, mistakes, or necessity* of my neighbour; knowing assuredly, that he who wrongs his neighbour, does the greatest injury to himself. And if at any time I am convinced that I have done him any wrong, I will make him satisfaction as far as I am able; without being forced by law *To do unto others what I would they should do unto me*.

To this end, I will endeavour to live *peaceably and charitably* with all people; avoiding all *malice and re-*

venge, and *evil-speaking*, and *contention*, as much as possibly I can. And I will speak truth at all times, and especially when I am called to my *oath*, whether it be *for* or *against* any worldly interest.

AS TO THE DUTY I OWE TO MYSELF—I am convinced, that my first and great concern ought to be, *to take care of my own soul*.

I do therefore stedfastly purpose to lead a serious life, as one *under the sentence of death* ought to do; To be *sober, temperate, and chaste*, that, when I die, I may be admitted into the paradise of God, where *no unclean thing* must enter.

To this end, I resolve to keep a watch over myself, that I may avoid all such *company*, such *pleasures*, and *diversions*, as may make me lose the remembrance of death, and the account I must give.

I will endeavour to be content with my condition, not coveting what is another man's, neither envying the *prosperity*, nor taking pleasure in the *calamities*, of my neighbour.

And forasmuch as a life of *illness* and *luxury* is hateful to God, I will strive to do my duty in the state of life in which his providence has placed me; not flattering myself that *I do no evil*, when *I do no good* in my generation; lest the sentence upon the unfruitful tree be passed upon me,—*Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?*

These duties I will endeavour to perform, as a proof of the love and reverence I bear to God, who is so good as to accept of my repentance, and a *sincere* though *imperfect* obedience.

And if through *weakness, temptation, or sudden surprise*, I shall be so unhappy as to forget any of these resolutions, and fall into sin, I will, as soon as I perceive it, beg God's pardon, and be more careful for the time to come.

Now if your conscience can witness for you that you piously purpose to live after this manner, you may safely go to the Lord's table, and the blessing of God will go along with you.

Go no further till you have considered those purposes again; for they are to be the purposes of your whole life, and of every day of your life.

And then address yourself to God, that through his gracious assistance, they may make the more lasting impression upon your mind.

THE PRAYER.

GRACIOUS GOD, who hast given us precepts and an example to walk by, let the remembrance of them be always seasonably present with me. Give me grace to practise them conscientiously, to reverence my betters, and all that are in authority, and especially such as are ordained to pray for, and to bless us in thy name. Let my love for thee and for my neighbour, keep me from all acts of injustice, or injury to his body or good name; let me never wilfully vex or trouble him; never covet what is his, or envy his prosperity. May I ever be ready to help and comfort all such as are in distress; give me grace to be faithful in all things committed to my trust; that I may never pervert truth and justice; never propagate slander, or raise evil reports, nor ever tempt others to sin. Give me the spirit of temperance and chastity, and grant that I may never provoke thee by any instance of uncleanness to shut me out of heaven, where no unclean thing can enter. Give me grace so to order my conversation, that I may encourage others to live as becomes the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for whose sake I beg to be heard. Amen.

SECTION VI.

The next Thing you are to enquire into is, Whether you have a LIVELY FAITH in GOD'S MERCY THROUGH CHRIST.

Now because so very much depends upon our having such a *faith*—the Holy Ghost has given us all the

arguments, all the assurance, that our hearts can desire. *God so loved the world that he spared not his own Son, (saith the Apostle,) but gave him up for us all,* Rom. viii. 32. Can there be a greater, a surer pledge of the love of God, for his poor creatures?—He made him to be sin (that is, a sin-offering.) He delivered him to death in our stead;—can we, after this, doubt of, or distrust the mercy of God?

Observe the method St. Paul takes to confirm our faith, by giving us the strongest proofs of our acceptance with God. *God, saith he, commended his love to us, in that while we were enemies, we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son—much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life;* Rom. v. 10. What may we not, after this, hope for from God?

In short, Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.—*Through him we have peace with God;* Rom. v. 1. This is the only foundation of our faith, our hope, and confidence. He is our *sacrificer, mediator, advocate;* the knowledge of which ought to remove all occasions of *despair and fear* from the displeasure of God.

Indeed if we should attempt to go to God, without an interest in Christ, we could hope for nothing but to be rejected: but when we go to him as *redeemed by his own Son—and represent to him, as we do in this holy Sacrament, what he has done and suffered for us,* we approach him as entirely reconciled to us.

But then you must remember, that he gave himself for us, and hath redeemed us from the power of the devil for this end, *that he may purify unto himself a people, consecrated to his service.* Consecrate, therefore, yourself to Jesus Christ, and with faithful Abraham, stagger not at the promises of God: but go to this Sacrament with a full assurance of faith, that God will pardon your sins, and give you all the graces you shall stand in need of. Only remember, *that this faith itself is the gift of God, and must be prayed for, for Christ's sake:* which you may do after this manner:

THE PRAYER.

I BESEECH thee, O God, by that love which moved thee to give thine own Son for lost mankind, give me a faith in thy promises for his sake, as firm as thy word, on which my faith is grounded: and let me never presume upon thy gracious promises, without sincerely endeavouring to perform the conditions on which they were made, and without being zealous of good works, for which we were redeemed. May the remembrance of our Saviour's love, and of thy great mercy, be ever seasonably present with me, to keep me from despair! And may my faith in thy promises support me in the hour of death! May my Redeemer be my refuge, his blood and merits plead for me, that I may have my lot and portion with those whom he hath purchased with his most precious blood! Amen.

SECTION VII.

Whether you have a thankful Remembrance of Christ's Death: — This is the next thing you are to enquire into.

Now this will always bear some proportion to the sense you have of the *evil* he has delivered you from, and the *blessing* he has by his death procured for you.

Consider, therefore, yourself as a *poor, sinful, lost, undone* creature, without a *Redeemer*.—Consider what that Redeemer has done for you:—What he did, and what he suffered, when he took upon himself to answer for the sins of men.

Consider that he was the Son of God; that *He had done no wrong, neither was guile found in his mouth;* notwithstanding this, being to answer for sinners, he was treated and punished as a sinner deserves to be: *He was despised! set at nought!* Persecuted and rejected by his own people, whom he came to redeem!

He was betrayed by his own disciple; falsely accused! Unrighteously condemned! Unmercifully scourged;—

Had a murderer preferred before him!—Was crucified as a *malefactor*: and in the very midst of his torments, was most inhumanly reviled.

Consider the reason of all this,—It was not only to satisfy the justice of God for the sins of men, and procure their pardon upon their repentance and future obedience: but also to show mankind what treatment *sin*, and *sinners*, who have rebelled against their Maker, do deserve; and to teach us, when God orders or permits us sinners to undergo such indignities and afflictions in this our state of trial, that we ought to take our cross patiently as our Redeemer did; and be content, and even pleased, to fulfil the will of God, in following his example *in his sufferings* in this life, that we may be partakers of his glory in the next.

In the next place, consider the blessing which Jesus Christ hath by his death obtained for us. He hath delivered us from the great power which the devil had over mankind, by procuring us grace to resist and overcome him. He hath prevailed with God—to overlook the untowardness of our nature;—to pardon our greatest offences upon our true repentance;—and, being by his death *reconciled* to God, we have, for his sake, free liberty to apply to him, as *children to a father*, for what we stand in need of.

He has also obtained for us the assistance of an Almighty Spirit, to enable us to know and to do what is necessary to fit us for heaven and happiness: And he has prevailed with God that these shall be our certain portion, if we are not wanting to ourselves. In one word, Jesus Christ has entirely freed us from all fears of what may come hereafter, if it is not purely our own fault.

The most unlearned Christian may know what is required of him.

The greatest sinner may depend upon pardon on his repentance.

The weakest Christian may rely upon all necessary assistance: and the meanest Christian is sure not to be overlooked.

By all which you may perceive what *thanks you* owe to God for your great and good *Redeemer*, and for what he has done and suffered for you: which you will do well to express in some such manner as this.

THE PRAYER.

GIVE me leave, O God, to mention before thee the death of thy Son, and the infinite blessings I have received thereby add this to all thy favours, I beseech thee, that I may never forget these mercies; never forget to be thankful for them; but that I may preserve the remembrance of them in the manner which he hath ordained. I thank thee, O God, for that word in which thou hast caused these thy mercies and his example to be recorded. Make me truly sensible of that love which brought him down from Heaven; and how sad our condition was, which required such a sacrifice. May I learn by his patience, humility, self-denial, and resignation, what virtues are most acceptable to thy divine Majesty!—And may I take him for my Lord and Master, and Teacher, and Example; and dedicate myself to thee, and to thy service, for his sake! Amen.

SECTION VIII.

The last Enquiry you are to make is, Whether you are in Charity with all the World?

CONCERNING which, take especial notice, that the two great ends of this ordinance mentioned in Scripture are:

The first, To keep up the remembrance of Christ's Death till his coming again.

The second, To be a solemn token of our communion with Jesus Christ, and of our union and charity with all his family.

To this end he has ordained, that as all Christians, *high and low, rich and poor*, shall make up one body, of which he is the Head; and one family, of which he

is the Master. So they should all eat at one table, of one bread as a sign of that *love*, and *peace*, and *friendship*, and *readiness* to help one another, as occasion shall require, and as members of the same body we naturally do.

And indeed your acceptance with God will very much depend upon your hearty good will for every Christian, and for all mankind.

Therefore you must take especial care, lest there be any person with whom you are not at peace; whom you cannot forgive, and pray for, and do him all the good that can in reason be expected from you: That you be disposed to make satisfaction to any person that has been injured by you, or who may have taken just offence at your words or actions, this being a duty which Jesus Christ himself has commanded, *Matt. v. 23.* And that you be ready to *forgive* every person, who may have injured you, as you expect *forgiveness* of God: Remembering the dreadful sentence mentioned in *Matt. xviii.* *Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all thy debt: shouldst not thou have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And the Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors.*

And lastly, you are to take care, that you love, *not in word only, but in deed, and in truth*; that is, that you do good as well as give good words; and believe Jesus Christ in his poor members.

And believe it for a certain truth, that a charitable and forgiving temper is not near so beneficial to any body as to him that hath it; *it being more blessed to give than to receive*; and to forgive than to insist upon satisfaction for injuries and wrongs done to us; *Acts xx. 35.*

'This being so necessary a grace, you will not fail to beg of God most earnestly to vouchsafe it to you.

THE PRAYER.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Hear, O my soul, what thy Sa-

viour has commanded thee ; He who loved us, and gave himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for us.

May this thy love, O Jesus, be the motive and pattern of my love and charity for all mankind ! Where this hath not been my practice, I implore thy gracious pardon ; and beseech thee to fortify my soul against all suggestions of *Satan*, or my corrupt nature and blind passions. That I may always be prepared to go to thine altar, with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire and hope to die.

Thou, O Jesus, madest thine enemies thy friends, by laying down thy life for them. Be thou my advocate with God for grace to follow thy heavenly charity and example, that *I may overcome evil with good* ; that I, and all the members of thy family, *may love as brethren* ; That we may always meet at thy table as sincere friends, and part with true love and affection, as becomes thy disciples. Amen.

SECTION IX.

By this time you see the reason of this institution ; the *necessity*, as well as the invaluable blessing, of observing it religiously ; and the manner of preparing yourself for it, as often as you have an opportunity.

And remember, that the oftener you look into the state of your soul, in order to go to this ordinance, the less trouble you will have to make your peace with God, when you come to die ; and the less danger you will be in of falling into a state of sin and security, which has been the ruin of an infinite number of souls.

Besides this, you will have the greatest comfort in life, when you perceive that you are still growing in grace, and tending to that perfection which must fit you for heaven.

On the other hand, if you turn your back upon this ordinance, it must be because you will not be at the pains to understand your *duty*, your *interest*, and your *danger*.

You have not considered that there is no *pardon*, no

grace, no salvation to be hoped for, but by pleading with God what his Son hath done, and suffered, and merited for us, and in the manner he has ordained.

And if you will consult your our conscience, it will tell you, that some of these are the true, though most wretched causes of your contempt of this command of your Saviour's.

Either you live in some known sin, or ungodly way of life, which you cannot resolve to forsake : Or, you are not willing to renew your vows made in baptism : Or, which is generally the case, you have no real concern for your soul ; only you delude yourself with some faint purposes and hopes, that some time or other you will become a new man.

In the mean time you are guilty of a *sin* too like the *denying the Lord that bought you* : You bring an evil report upon an ordinance of Christ, as if it were not worth observing ; You harden wicked people in their infidelity, and neglect of their salvation, by calling yourself a Christian, and living like an heathen, in the contempt of one of the greatest means of salvation : You live in a state in which all your prayers, whether public or private, whether for yourself or for others, will be rejected.

In short, you provoke God every day more and more to withdraw his grace,—To leave you to your own corrupt way of living, till you have filled up the measure of your sins, and prepared for yourself a sentence not to be heard without trembling, *I tell you that none of these men that were bidden, shall taste of my supper*—The marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven.

How great then must the sin of *those* be, who *neglect to administer*, and of *those who turn their backs* upon this ordinance, upon which our salvation depends ! *It being the blood of Christ which must cleanse us from all sin* ; 1 John i. 7.

After all, this is not to encourage any person to go to the Lord's Supper without a *wedding-garment*, without a due regard to the duty. For a man may go so unworthily, as to receive *judgment instead of a*

blessing. For example, *Such* as live in any known sin unrepented of: *Such* as are not sincerely resolved to live and be governed by the known laws of the gospel; *Such* as live at variance with their neighbours, without being willing to be reconciled; *Such* as have done wrong, and will not make satisfaction, as they are able; Lastly, *Such* as go out of mere custom, without considering the *end* or *benefit* of the ordinance; and return to their usual sinful liberties, as soon as the service is over.

All such ought to know, that they went unworthily; and if they have any true concern for their souls, they will consider better, and lay themselves under stricter obligations, before they go again to the Lord's Supper.

But then, let them not, at the peril of their souls, deal deceitfully, and make this a pretence of neglecting to go to this ordinance for the future; lest they provoke God to leave them to themselves, which is one of the greatest judgments that can beset them.

On the other hand, let not any well-meaning Christians be *discouraged* with fears of having gone unworthily to the Lord's Supper; and so forbear, because they do not find all the *benefit* and *change* wrought in them, which they hoped for; but let them consider that a state of *holiness* and *perfection* is not to be expected at once, but by degrees; and as we make good use of the graces which the Holy Spirit from time to time vouchsafes to us.

A good Christian not being one who has no inclination to sin, but *one* who through the grace of God, immediately checks and suffers not such inclination to grow into evil habits.

God, who knows our infirmities, will accept our *sincere endeavours*, though attended with *imperfections* and *backslidings*, provided we condemn ourselves for them, and strive to mend.

And let us remember for our comfort that Jesus Christ himself pronounced all his disciples (*the traitor excepted*) to be *clean*, that is, *qualified* to receive this Sacrament, which he was going to administer to them,

although he knew them to be subject to very great *failings* and *infirmities*; which soon appeared, when they all forsook him, contrary to their solemn promises; but this they repented of, and were forgiven by their compassionate Redeemer.

If therefore you *love* God, and your neighbour, *though not so fervently* as you could wish; If you have a real *desire* of being better than at present you find yourself to be; If the fruits of the Holy Spirit, though in a very low degree, do appear in your life; Lastly, if you do daily *pray* for God's grace that you may, in his good time, be what he would have you to be, and do not live in any known sin; by no means forbear to go to this ordinance, as often as you have an opportunity; and depend upon God's blessing and an increase of his graces.

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, O God, that I may never draw down thy judgments upon myself, either by turning my back upon this ordinance, or by going to it without thought and unworthily. May thy mercy pardon what is past, and give me grace for the time to come, to consecrate my life to thee, and to embrace every occasion of remembering my Redcemer's love, and thereby securing thy favour, and my own salvation! And if it be thy will, grant that I may always find such comfort and benefit in this ordinance, as may encourage me to observe it with joy unto my life's end.

Give me leave to recommend to thine infinite mercy the miserable condition of all such as neglect so great means of grace and salvation. Awaken all Christian people into a sense of this duty;—Open their eyes and correct their mistakes, that they may be convinced, that this is the only means of making their peace with thee, and of rendering their persons and their prayers acceptable to thy divine Majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SECTION X

EVERY well-disposed Christian, after he has thus far prepared himself for this Sacrament, will endeavour to keep the thoughts of his duty, and the blessing he hopes for, warm in his heart until the time of receiving.

Some of the following *Scriptures*, and meditations upon them, may, through God's grace, answer that end; nor will they take up too much time, because some or more of them, as occasion offers, may be devoutly used in the midst of business.

And this method of devotion is here proposed, to lead Christians to make proper reflections upon other parts of Scripture which they read or hear.

Rev. iii. 17. Thou sayst I am rich, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

This is the sad condition to which, as sinners, we are subject, and it is thy mercy, O God, that any of us are sensible of it. Preserve me, I beseech thee, from that blindness which would hinder me from seeing my own misery; and from that *pride* which would keep me from acknowledging it before thee, who alone canst help me. O give me a true sense of the maladies I labour under, and keep me for thy mercies sake, and for the sake of Jesus my Redeemer.

Psalm li. 17. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, God will not despise.

But most unfit is *mine* to be to God presented, until I have obtained his pardon for the many sins by which it has been defiled.

Jer. iii. 12, 13. I am merciful, saith the Lord: and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.

I do acknowledge my sin unto thee, O God, and mine iniquities will I not hide; I do therefore implore thy pardon, and plead thy gracious promise, with full purpose of heart, never again to return to folly.

Jer. xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?

I cannot, indeed, answer for my own heart ; but there is nothing, O Lord, impossible with thee ; in thee I do put my trust : let me never be put to confusion ; Keep it ever in my heart, what an *evil thing*, and *bitter*; it will be to *forsake the Lord*.

1 John iii. 8. He that committeth sin (who abandons himself to live in known sin) is of the devil : is under his power and government.

Preserve me, gracious God, from so fatal a blindness, to choose *Sutan* for my *lord* and *governor*, instead of thy *blessed Son*, who laid down his life to redeem us from the dreadful tyranny of the devil.

1 John ii. 23. This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

How infinitely good is God, to give us so great encouragement to save ourselves from ruin ! Give me, I beseech thee, a firm faith in this promise, that no *fears* may terrify me, no *pleasures* may corrupt my heart. No *difficulties* may discourage me from serving thee.

Matt. xvi. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

O my Saviour ! who pleasedst not thyself, but tookest upon thee the form of a servant : let me not profess to follow thee without endeavouring to follow the blessed steps of thy most holy life. Thy *patience*, *meekness*, and *humility* : Thy *great disregard* for the world, its *pleasures*, *profits*, and all its *idols* : Thy sensible concern for the miseries of men : Thy unwearyedness in doing good : Thy constancy in prayer, and resignation to the will of thy Father,—Let me part with any thing as dear as a *right hand*, or a *right eye*, rather than not follow thee.

Matt. vi. 24. No man can serve two masters.—You cannot serve God and mammon.

May I never set up any *rival*, O God, with thee, in the possession of my heart ! May I never attempt to reconcile thy service with that world which is *enmity with thee* ! Give me, I beseech thee, *the eyes of faith*,

that I may see the world, what in truth it is,—The danger of its *riches*,—The folly of its *pleasures*,—The multitude of its *snares*,—The power of its *temptations*. Its *deadly poison*, and certain danger of drawing my heart from the love of thee.

Matt. xxii. 37, 39. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart—and thy neighbour as thyself.*

O that the love of God *may be the commanding principle of my soul*: and that I may have this comfortable proof of his love abiding in me, that I study to please him, and to keep his commandments; That my love to my neighbour may be such as God has commanded; that I may *give and forgive*, and *love* as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ!

1 John iii. 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*

What it is to love *my neighbour as myself*, thou, O Lord, hast taught me in thy holy word; Never to *wrong* or *deceive* him; Never to *grieve* him, or without a cause to *create* him trouble: Never to *treat* him with *contempt* and *scorn*; Never to be *pleased* with his *misfortunes* and *faults*; But to *rejoice* in his *happiness*, and help him in his *wants*. Give me, O Lord, this proof of my having passed from death unto life.

Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.* That is, he was treated as one under the curse of the law; Deut. xxi. 23.

Blessed God, how great was our *misery*! How great was thy *mercy*! When nothing could save us from ruin, but the death of thy Son! I see by this, how hateful sin is to thee. Make it so to me, I beseech thee. May I never flatter myself that thy mercy will spare me, if I continue in sin, when thou sparedst not thine own Son, when he put himself in the place of sinners! May I never provoke thy justice! May I never forget thy mercies, and what thy Son has done for me!

Tit. ii. 14. *He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

Blessed be God that I am united to this people by *baptism*! Grant that I may never disgrace thee, or my Christian profession, by an ungodly life. O thou who hast redeemed us from sin and death, cause me to understand, to value, and ever remember thy great love; and to show that I do so, by a life *consecrated* to thy service.

2 Tim. ii. 12. If we deny him, he will also deny us.

How many deny thee, O Jesus, without *thought* and without *dread*! Do they know what they do, who *lightly* turn their backs upon this ordinance?—Who make a mock of sin, which cost thee thy life?—Who are ashamed of thee, and of thy Gospel, out of regard to men?—Who by their *unchristian* lives do renounce thy service? Do they consider what it is *to be denied by thee*?—That it is to have *no interest* in thy *death, thy merits, and mediation*?—Gracious God, deliver me from this dreadful *sin and judgment*!

Matt. xxvi. 35. Peter said, Though I shall die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.

Preserve me, gracious Lord, from a presumptuous opinion, and dependence on my own *strength*, without the aids of thy *grace*: Let me see, in this sad instance, my weakness without thy assistance, and my ruin without thy help.

Luke xxii. 61, 62. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the words of Christ; and went out, and wept bitterly.

O Jesus, look upon me with the same eye of compassion, whenever I shall do amiss, that I may see my fault, and forthwith return to my duty:—Let this instance of thy mercy be our comfort, since so great and repeated a crime did not exclude *this penitent* from thy mercy: but let not this make us fearless of offending thee, lest we never repent.

Luke xxii. 3, 4, 5. Then entered Satan into Judas, and he communed with the chief priests how he might betray him unto them:—And they covenanted to give him money, &c.

If I should provoke thee, O God, by resisting thy

Holy Spirit, to leave me to my own *natural corruption*, and to the power of *Satan*, I see in this wretched man what wickedness I am capable of. Lord God, abandon me not to my own choices. Shut my heart against that *covetousness*, which was the root of so great a sin. Keep me from *presumptuous sins*, lest they get dominion over me ; and secure me under the conduct of thy Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Deut. xvi. 16, 17. *They shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God, which he hath given thee.*

Shall I appear before thee, O God, worse than a *Jew*? Can I give any thing to *the poor*, but what I have received from thee? How can I say that I love thee much, if I give sparingly to them whom thou hast appointed in thy place to receive *our alms*? Give me an heart, O God, to give according to thy blessing upon me, and as I expect thy blessing upon myself and substance.

1 Pet. iv. 10. *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards.*

O God, thou hast taught us, that we are all but thy *stewards* :—Keep me, I beseech thee, from that great injustice of defrauding *thy poor* of their right :—give me grace to moderate all my vain *desires* and *expenses*, that I may have to give to them that need :—and that the *measure* of thy blessings to me may be the *measure* of my charity to others.

THE END.

ON
The Sacrament
OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE death of our Saviour Jesus Christ upon the cross was a full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, reconciling us with God, and redeeming us from eternal death. He loved us, and gave himself for us. So great and precious a benefit deserves to be had in everlasting remembrance: and our Lord and Saviour thought it not enough to purchase for us his Father's favour, but was pleased to appoint an ordinance, by which all his disciples, in all ages, might be reminded of his precious death, and also be made partakers of God's grace. In the same night that he was betrayed, he partook of the last supper with his disciples, and having told them to eat of the bread, and drink of the wine, as signs of his body and blood, which were about to be offered up for their sins, he commanded them to do it in remembrance of him. And St. Paul tells us, that by thus partaking of the bread and wine, we do show, or remember and represent, the Lord's death, until his coming again. So that all Christians are bound to partake of the Lord's Supper, even unto the end of the world.

How then can you pretend to be Christians, and yet refuse to come to the table of the Lord? How can you pretend to have a thankful remembrance of his death, and yet refuse to show it in the way which the Lord himself appointed.

Our blessed Saviour said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood in the Holy Communion. Is there not then good reason to fear, that those persons who stay away from the Holy Table, have no life abiding in them?

But in truth no man can have life abiding in him, who does not keep Christ's commands: for if he will not obey him, he does

not love him ; and if he loves him not, he has no share in his promises, no title to the inheritance of the saints in light. Jesus Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." If you refuse to go to his table, it is the same thing as if you were to say, 'No, Lord, I will not do it in remembrance of thee ; I will not do it at all.' Consider, after such an answer, what appearance you will make before the judgment seat of Christ.

My friends, lay these things to heart, and remember that if you would be Christ's disciples indeed, you must readily and cheerfully do all that He has commanded you to do. When *He* invites you, you must not say, *I cannot come*. But prepare yourselves to attend Him at his Holy Table devoutly, and with profit to yourselves. Think of your own sinfulness, and Christ's exceeding mercy in dying for you ; repent of your past transgressions, and pray God to forgive them for Christ's sake ; steadfastly purpose to lead a better life, and beg for grace to enable you so to do ; and lastly, be in charity with all men. *Without* such preparation as this, you are not fit even to *pray* to Almighty God ; *with* it, you are as fit as human frailty can be, to come to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and may expect to find therein much spiritual comfort and strength, and grace to help in time of need.

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YOUNG PERSONS INVITED TO THE LORD'S TABLE.

AMONG the many and various pleas which are advanced, in vindication of neglect of the Lord's Supper, one of the most prevalent is the plea of *youth*. Very many young persons, who in other respects are religiously disposed, absent themselves from the Lord's Table almost as a matter of course. They thus acquire a habit of neglecting, without compunction, their Redeemer's dying command: the habit gains strength as they advance in years; and perhaps they never receive this Holy Sacrament, or receive it only on their death-bed.—It is very desirable to do away so dangerous a delusion.

It is the judgment of our Church, that all persons who are old enough to be confirmed,—all persons who have come to years of discretion,—are old enough to receive the Lord's Supper; and that, consequently, they cannot neglect it without being guilty of sin,—the sin of omitting a known duty. In most foreign countries, which profess the Christian religion, young persons are in the habit of communicating from an early age. In this country, however, a mistaken notion too generally prevails, that this Sacrament is intended only for the more advanced in years, and that for a young person to partake of it is a dangerous presumption. Not satisfied with abstaining from it themselves, some people endeavour to dissuade others; and perhaps blame and judge those who comply with the Lord's dying injunction. The whole of this conduct is founded in mistake, and proceeds from not properly considering and understanding either the nature of the Christian Religion in general, or that of this Sacrament in particular.

It appears to be the design and the spirit of religion, that we should be dedicated to God—should *belong* to God—before the world or the devil have taken possession of us. As God directed the children of his chosen people to be entered into covenant with him at eight days old, so, from the earliest time, it has been the practice of the Church of Christ to baptize the children of Christian parents in infancy, and thus to make them subjects of God's spiritual kingdom. Under the Old Dispensation it was said, that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God had ordained strength, or perfected praise; and under the New we are told, that our Lord said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*

As children have been dedicated to Christ in baptism, so as, their minds and understandings begin to open, they are to be imbued with such religious truths as are most easy of comprehension, and carefully taught *which be the first principles of the oracles*.

of God. As the mind advances, they should advance in knowledge ; and at the age of fifteen or sixteen years, they may fairly be supposed to be sufficiently instructed in all things that a Christian ought to know and believe for his soul's health. They are then quite old enough to understand the account given of the Lord's Supper in the Catechism and in the Communion Service ; they are then quite old enough to perceive, that there is the same reason for their communicating now, that there was for their being baptized when children : and that they cannot neglect to communicate, without disobedience to the authority of Jesus Christ. They are old enough to understand the chief truths of the Christian Religion, which are summed up and represented in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The death of Christ for our sins is particularly shown forth and represented in the Lord's Supper ; of which all are old enough to partake, who are old enough to understand the danger and the punishment of sin, and the greatness of the redemption effected for us by the death of the Son of God.

I am confident that there is no one who does not acknowledge the justice and the propriety of complying with the advice of Solomon, to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. And shall not those who are in the days of their youth remember their Redeemer also ? And if they remember him at all, shall they refuse to remember him in the way which he himself appointed, when he gave the bread and the wine, and said expressly, *This do in remembrance of me !* Can the young hope to be saved in any other way than by the death of Christ ? And can they hope to be saved by that death, if they refuse to commemorate it,—to show it forth,—in the way which the Lord hath commanded : which they themselves know, and acknowledge, that He hath commanded !

And what reason can they pretend for refusing to communicate ? Surely, not that young people do well, while they continue young, to follow the bent of their own will, and to enjoy themselves as they can, without troubling themselves with thinking of religion. None of you, I am persuaded, can think this. God hath given no one,—no one *whatever*, whether young or old, a licence to sin. If a young man, in the high spirits and confident presumption of youth, chooses to walk after the ways of his own heart, in whatever sin his wayward will may choose, he is solemnly warned, that for all these things God will bring him into judgment. We have been enlisted as the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and all, whether old or young, must “ fight manfully under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil.” If we hope to succeed, we must humbly seek for fresh supplies of strength and vigour in that ordinance which was appointed on purpose for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls.

Neither can any of you be so unwise as to say, “ we will enjoy ourselves now, and it will be time enough to think of religion, and of the sacrament, when we begin to grow old.” You know well that you may not live to grow old : for what is your life ? v

is even a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away! We none of us know what shall be on the morrow; and if we venture to put off the time for thinking seriously of religion, the delay may be the ruin of our souls for ever.

But, perhaps, some may be disposed to think, that receiving the Lord's Supper is so solemn and serious a thing, as to be inconsistent with the cheerfulness and joyous spirits of youth. Religion, certainly, is no enemy to a well-regulated cheerfulness, and is far from recommending or encouraging a gloomy and melancholy deportment. And as in religion in general, so in the Lord's Supper, which is the highest office of religion, there is nothing inconsistent with *a proper* cheerfulness. It is true, that religion allows nobody, whether young or old, to be thoughtless and inconsiderate; and young people, long before they attain the age which I have mentioned, ought to be in the habit of *considering their ways*; of considering themselves as in the constant presence of God; of wisely considering their latter end; of considering what is likely to be their situation in the world to come. But such consideration is compatible with a well-regulated cheerfulness, and is also *a* main part of the proper preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Or do any think that young people should not come to the Lord's Supper, on account of the peculiar temptations to which, at their age, they may be exposed?

It is true, generally speaking, that every age, as well as every state and condition of life, has peculiar temptations belonging to it. There are some sins which more easily beset the young, and others which more particularly assail the more advanced in years. No age, however, is attacked by any temptations but such as are common to men; and all of every age are bound manfully to strive against temptation, in humble reliance on the help of God and in full confidence,—weak though they are in themselves,—that they can do all things through Christ strengthening them: and that he will with the temptation also make a way to escape, so that they may be able to bear and to overcome it. If *all* who are exposed to temptations to sin were to stay away from the Lord's Supper, none could partake of it; for, as I have said, all are exposed to some temptation or other. But this very consideration furnishes an additional argument why both young and old should draw near to this sacred rite, in order that they may receive fresh supplies of spiritual strength, and be the better enabled to contend with the manifold temptations that we all daily meet with.

I apprehend that many young people stay away from the Lord's Supper, not because they feel that they have any good reason to give for their absence, but because they think that persons of their own age seldom partake of it. Let such persons remember, that their conduct ought to be governed by the will and the word of God, and not by the example of others, whether those others are many or few. Let them remember, that they must not *follow a multitude to do evil*, and that it is *evil* to disobey the dying com-

mand of their Saviour, and to turn their backs on the Lord's table. Rather let them resolve, instead of following the example of others to do evil, to endeavour, by their own good example, to lead others to do well. In this instance, as in others, let them wish and endeavour so to *let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven.*

We are all of us much the creatures of habit, which becomes in some sort a second nature. So much is this the case, that many men speak of any particular place, or object, or custom, as seeming *quite natural* to them, when they mean that they have been long accustomed or habituated to it. Hence arises the great consequence of acquiring good habits, and of avoiding bad habits, especially in our early years. It is nothing but *habit* that keeps many persons from partaking of the Lord's Supper. They do not partake of it now, because they never did partake of it formerly, because they have acquired the *habit* of absenting themselves. Let young persons take heed how they thus acquire a habit of neglecting the dying injunction of their Lord; and let them endeavour in this, as in all other instances, to acquire the habit of ready and uniform and constant obedience to the will of God.

Let it not be supposed that I would invite or encourage any one to partake of this holy ordinance who is not properly prepared for it. Certainly no persons, whether young or old, should approach the Lord's table, unless they sincerely believe the chief articles of the Christian faith, and truly repent of their past sins, stedfastly purposing, in humble reliance on Divine grace, to lead a better life for the time to come. But such repentance and faith are necessary to the salvation, to the safety, of every Christian of the age which I have mentioned, whether he receives the Lord's Supper or not; and one great reason why I am anxious that young persons should become regular communicants, is, because I am anxious that they should often examine into the sincerity both of their faith and of their repentance, and that their religious impressions should thus be rendered more strong and lively, at the same time that their souls are strengthened and refreshed by partaking of the body and blood of Christ.

Let me beg you to remember, as I have just said, that no Christian who has arrived at the age of reason can hope to be saved, except he repent, and believe the Gospel: and that every one, generally speaking, who is old enough to repent and believe,—every one who is old enough to fear and to serve God,—every one that is old enough seriously to wish for salvation, and to understand the terms on which salvation is offered,—every one that is old enough to wish and endeavour, in good earnest, to go to heaven rather than to hell—is old enough also to partake of the Lord's Supper.

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